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**WARTIME  
TRANSFERENCE OF LABOUR  
IN GREAT BRITAIN**

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## FOREWORD

In June 1941, the International Labour Office published a report, *Labour Supply and National Defence*, which analysed the major manpower problems involved in mobilisation for total war and described the measures being taken in a number of countries to meet these problems. The report dealt with the allocation of manpower between industry and the fighting forces, the control of employment, the vocational training and retraining of war workers, the mobilisation and distribution of labour resources, the determination of labour requirements and resources, and the administrative machinery needed for wartime employment organisation. The draft of this report was submitted to a Canada-United States tripartite meeting on labour supply held in Montreal under the auspices of the International Labour Office; and the conclusions of principle embodied in the report were formulated in the light of the discussion which took place at this meeting.

At a further Canada-United States tripartite meeting, the Office was asked to study in more detail the question of wartime labour transference as a method for satisfying the growing demands of war industries and for securing the most efficient distribution of the available workers in essential employments. The present study is one of the reports prepared to meet this request. Its purpose is to describe the development of methods used to transfer labour to war work in Great Britain.

A preliminary draft of the report was submitted to Canada-United States meetings held in February and March 1942. The report was then completed and revised by the author, Elizabeth Mayer Johnstone (a member of the Employment and Labour Conditions Section of the Office), in Great Britain. The study is necessarily incomplete since the situation is in continuous evolution and since, for reasons of security, statistical analysis of the movement of labour to war work is still excluded. Nevertheless, the Office hopes that the report, as it stands, will provide a useful and suggestive survey of the evolution of policy and practice in a country which has reached a relatively advanced stage in the mobilisation of its manpower.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

**T**HE broadening war effort of the United Nations demands tremendous industrial power. The vital necessity for maximising production to provide ships, tanks, aircraft, guns and other munitions for the fighting forces has given added urgency and importance to manpower problems. The imperious demands of war industries for labour can be met only by sustained and systematic effort to mobilise men and women for these industries and to place them in the employments where each can take a full share in the war production programme.

The present study describes the methods by which one of the United Nations—Great Britain—has been transferring labour to war work. In three years of war, Britain has slowly but surely achieved a striking mobilisation of resources. Out of an active adult population of some 33,000,000, at least 75 per cent. are now effectively occupied in the armed forces, in war industry or in other work or service. This general mobilisation of manpower has included a vast transfer of labour to war industrial work. Although for reasons of security little statistical information regarding the movement of workers to war employments can be made public, the methods by which the transfer of labour has been organised are of immediate practical interest to the other nations now engaged in mobilising their manpower for total war.

Policy governing the transfer of labour resources to war industries in Great Britain has followed the course of development of the war economy as a whole. At first, productive capacity was limited; and the need for the transfer of workers was so small that little organised effort was necessary to encourage or to facilitate transfers. Next, the need centred primarily on workers in possession of rare skills; and direct action was taken to place as many of these workers as possible in jobs where they could make the most effective contribution to war production. Finally, with a widespread shortage of all kinds of labour, the need for a general redistribution of manpower became a dominant factor in the war economy; and extensive transfers of all categories of labour have supplemented the more limited and selective transfers of specialised workers.

The powers of the Government to control the distribution of the human resources of the country are very great. In practice, however, the Government exercised its full powers of control very little at first, relying primarily on the existence and development of "a co-operative will" among workers, employers and "everybody in the country" to help to work out and to put into effect schemes for the transfer of workers from one employment to another.<sup>1</sup> With the evolution of the war economy bringing a growing shortage of labour, the gradual accumulation of experience of labour transfer, and the more widespread understanding of policy throughout the country, the Government has become more willing to give a strong lead and, where necessary, to exercise its compulsory powers. The mere fact that these powers lie in the background and may be used as a last resort has greatly widened the field of action possible through voluntary agreement and indirect pressure.

The development and maintenance of a "co-operative will" in regard to a policy which has necessarily disturbed the life of millions of people has not been an easy or short-term task. It has not only slowed up industrial mobilisation but has meant that labour redistribution policy has developed in a rather piecemeal manner which has often precluded the possibility of obtaining a comprehensive view of the manpower situation as a whole. But the Minister of Labour and National Service has often emphasised the futility of speeding the evolution of labour supply policy at the expense of the understanding, acceptance and participation of labour and management in the execution of the policy. "I felt that timing was the most essential thing in the handling of this problem", he said. "If things were not timed properly, if, say, we moved a month or two months too soon and produced disputes and troubles, the loss of production would have been immense, if not irrecoverable."<sup>2</sup>

The period from September 1939 to May 1940 was essentially one of inactivity. The Government adopted a deliberate policy of non-intervention in the employment market. This policy was soon found to be inadequate to prevent disturbances in war production on the one hand, and on the other to attain an orderly and well-timed flow of labour to essential work. Unemployment remained at a high level and was aggravated by a number of

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<sup>1</sup> "It is not only the Ministry of Labour that can do this transferring", declared the Minister of Labour. "I want to get a co-operative will between employers and everybody in the country, to facilitate the work of the officials of my Ministry . . ." (*Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 29 July 1941, col. 1371).

<sup>2</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 5 March 1942, col. 892.

other measures, such as the raw materials control and the Limitation of Supplies Order, which were designed primarily to conserve foreign exchange but which affected (often by accident) the distribution of labour between non-essential and essential activity.

The greatest problem during this period was that of labour turnover, particularly among skilled workers in the engineering trades. The continuous movement of skilled men from one job to another—and not always to more essential jobs—had a decidedly injurious effect on war production. Although a Control of Employment Act<sup>1</sup> was passed soon after the outbreak of war, it was an enabling measure only and no use was made of its powers until April 1940, when an Order was issued forbidding employers in the building and civil engineering contracting industries to advertise for carpenters, joiners or bricklayers.<sup>2</sup> In the absence of further regulation, what happened was inevitable. By May 1940, every branch of war production had been hampered to a greater or less degree by “labour poaching”. The Minister of Labour later described the situation at that time, stating:

The labour situation was in chaos. Contracts had been given out to different firms on a basis which enabled them to poach men from other employers and from local authorities and the steps they were taking to achieve their end would have soon resulted in a complete disorganisation of our industrial effort. What was more serious was that this was undermining the whole of the trade union movement itself. Agents of a very undesirable kind, who were bribing people to leave one place to go to another and who were profiting by such exchange, were beginning to spring up . . . <sup>3</sup>

The critical military situation that arose in May 1940 swept away much opposition to industrial mobilisation for defence. The Emergency Powers (Defence) Act, 1940, signed on 22 May, extended the powers of the Government to include “power by Order in Council to make such Defence Regulations making provision for requiring persons to place themselves, their services, and their property at the disposal of His Majesty, as appear to him to be necessary or expedient for securing the public safety, the defence of the Realm, the maintenance of public order, or the efficient prosecution of any war in which His Majesty may be engaged, or for maintaining supplies or services essential to the life of the community”. A Regulation issued under the Act on the same day grants the Minister of Labour and National Service the power to direct any person in Great Britain to perform any services of

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<sup>1</sup> The Control of Employment Act, 1939, 2 & 3 Geo. VI, ch. 104.

<sup>2</sup> The Control of Employment (Advertisements) Order, 1940, dated 4 April 1940, S.R. & O. 1940, No. 522.

<sup>3</sup> Speech of the Minister of Labour and National Service, 20 October 1940, at the Annual Conference of the Society of School Candidates.



which he is capable that may be specified by directions issued by or on behalf of the Minister, provided that the standards determined by collective agreements, Joint Councils, or arbitration or conciliation agencies, are observed, or, failing any such determinations, those generally observed "among good employers in that trade in the district".<sup>1</sup> This Regulation is the basis of the authority of the Government to control the allocation and distribution of labour for war industries. The powers granted by it are exercised, on behalf of the Minister of Labour, by any person with a National Service Officer's warrant. In practice, these Officers (who now number nearly 3,000) are in almost all cases operating officials of the Ministry of Labour and National Service.<sup>2</sup>

The powers accorded through Regulations 58A (as it is known) were immediately applied to control the movement of workers in key defence industries from one job to another. A first Restriction on Engagement Order<sup>3</sup>, effective on 10 June 1940, was intended to

<sup>1</sup> Regulation 58A of the Defence (General) Regulations, 1939. The Control of Employment Act has been superseded by these Regulations. The Regulations also permit the Minister to enter and inspect premises, to require employers to produce accounts, and to compel persons to register particulars about themselves.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 149 below.

<sup>3</sup> The Undertakings (Restriction on Engagement) Order, 1940, S. R. & O. 1940, No. 877. The Order provided that:

(1) No employer in the building industry, the civil engineering contracting or the general engineering industries may engage or seek to engage workers except by notifying the employment exchange of the job vacancy and hiring a worker submitted by the exchange.

(2) No worker may obtain a job in these industries except by applying for it through an employment exchange.

(3) Advertisements for these types of workers are therefore banned; and unregulated transfer from one employer to another in these industries is illegal.

(4) Men normally employed in agriculture and in coalmining may not be engaged by an employer in any other industry, unless the worker in question has been submitted to the employer by a local employment exchange.

(5) In all cases, the engagement or re-engagement of workers need not go through the employment exchange machinery if it is carried out by means of approved arrangements between an employer and a trade union, or in the case of a re-engagement of a worker last employed by the employer within 14 days before the re-engagement, or after a period of sickness or an industrial dispute.

Restrictions on engagement were placed on employers and workers in the electrical installation industry early in 1941. In December 1941, both Orders were replaced by a new Undertakings (Restriction on Engagement) Order (S.R. & O. 1941, No. 2069, dated 18 December 1941). The major changes are:

(1) Directions may be issued by the Minister exempting certain employers and workers from the restrictions.

(2) The exemption permitting the re-engagement of workers within a period of 14 days is not to apply to building and civil engineering contracting undertakings.

(3) The provision that an employer shall not engage men whose normal employment is coalmining except for work in that industry is omitted. (The engagement of miners is dealt with in the Essential Work (Coalmining Industry) (No. 3) Order, 1941, S. R. & O., No. 2096.)

(4) A definition of "trade dispute" is included.

prevent the enticement of workers from essential to non-essential work and to ensure economy in the use of skilled, and to some extent unskilled, labour in essential industries. The Order granted the employment exchanges a monopoly of the placement of all workers (with a few exceptions) in the building, civil engineering and general engineering industries.<sup>1</sup> But aside from this action to bring labour turnover under control, attention was centred largely on completing the necessary preliminaries to measures for transferring workers from one employment to another and on the selective transfer of skilled workers from one job to another. Until 1941, however, the Government relied almost wholly on a variety of indirect inducements to transfer and little positive action was taken to organise or to remove the obstacles to transference.

One of the first acts of the Minister of Labour and National Service, after taking office in May 1940, was to set up improvised labour supply machinery to supplement the nationally-operated network of employment exchanges. A National Labour Supply Board (with the Minister of Labour as chairman) was established; local Labour Supply Committees were set up in important industrial areas; the Area Boards of the Ministry of Supply were transferred to the Ministry of Labour and National Service; over 100 special Inspectors of Labour Supply were added to the staff of the Ministry of Labour; and local panels were set up for particular war industries. This new machinery was to work in close association with the employment exchange machinery, on the one hand, and with the production machinery of the Supply Departments, on the other. Management and labour were represented in most parts of the new organisation, thus giving it a practical link with industrial activity, from the local to the national level. During the summer of 1940, this labour supply organisation took an active part in "combing out" under-employed skilled labour and arranging for the transfer of certain types of workers from one employment to another.<sup>2</sup>

As the need for particular categories of skilled workers became more acute, registration on a voluntary basis was changed to registra-

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<sup>1</sup> This Order apparently helped (as a short-term policy) to check the practice of labour poaching in the engineering industries. An employer could tell the employment exchange that a worker who had left his employment was vital to his production and that his production was vital to the war effort, and he could ask the employment exchange to refuse the worker other employment in the industry. This was supposed to force the worker to return to his job. "In practice (the Select Committee on National Expenditure pointed out) there was a loophole in this provision, because men could still obtain employment through the trade unions. In effect, even after a man was compelled to return, he was often disgruntled and an unwilling worker." (*Fifteenth Report* from the Committee, Session 1940-1941, London, 1941.)

<sup>2</sup> For a brief description of the present machinery, see pp. 145-155 below.

tion on a compulsory basis for specified occupational groups. Thus, during 1940, the obligation to register with an employment exchange was extended to dock workers, professional engineers and scientists, men in the principal engineering trades<sup>1</sup>, chemists, physicists and quantity surveyors.<sup>2</sup> These registrations did not imply transfer; they merely put the Government in a position to estimate the size of the labour reserve in any particular category of skill, and to know what each worker was doing so that his present occupation could be weighed against the type of work that he might be asked to do. They were an essential preliminary to actual transfer and helped to place the transfer of technical and skilled workers on a practical and orderly basis. To a certain extent, the very fact of registration has tended to constitute an incentive to transfer. The Minister of Labour stated in December 1941 that, through these special registrations and those carried out during 1941 to meet the needs of particular industries, "thousands of men and women have been brought back to industries from many of which they were driven through unemployment. They have readily come back and they are entitled to the thanks of the nation for the sacrifices they have made."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This was done, for example, through the Industrial Registration Order (as amended), which applied to all men in the principal engineering trades who were not engaged wholly on Government work or other important work requiring rare skills, who were between 21 and 65 years of age and capable of work, and who at any time within the last twelve years had been engaged for not less than twelve months in any of the occupations specified by the Order. Men wholly engaged on Government work or in iron and steel manufacture, shipping services, shipbuilding and repairing or other specified industries or maintenance work were exempted from registration. Employers were compelled to furnish lists of workers affected by the Order who were engaged on Government or essential work, together with certificates covering those other workers who were engaged full time on such work.

<sup>2</sup> Registration was also required of all persons normally in employment and billeted by a local authority on removal to another area under an approved evacuation scheme.

<sup>3</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 4 December 1941, col. 1350. See also pp. 30-36 below.

## II. INCENTIVES TO TRANSFER

During the summer of 1940, organised efforts to induce labour transference were confined largely to individual workers in possession of necessary skill of one kind or another who were urgently needed to overcome some kind of production bottleneck in essential industries or services. Much of this transference was effected by improvisation, because, as the Minister of Labour explained: "We could not stop to put a long-term policy into operation while we had the Dunkirk position and the Battle of Britain facing us. Therefore, there was a good deal of irritation and difficulty that had to be overcome in the short-term policy. During the time that that was proceeding we were working out a long-term policy."<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, voluntary and largely unorganised transfer of labour resources to war work continued to take place and was given impetus by a variety of indirect measures—for example, the operation of the Schedule of Reserved Occupations, unemployment and short time caused by restrictions of production for one reason or another, the possibilities of financial gain in war industries, the limitation of the right of the unemployed to refuse employment offered them, and the response of skilled and other workers to appeals to transfer to more essential activity.

### THE SCHEDULE OF RESERVED OCCUPATIONS

The Schedule of Reserved Occupations had the effect of encouraging many types of workers to transfer from non-essential to essential work within any one industry and from a non-essential to an essential industry or occupation. This movement of labour was not deliberately encouraged by the Government but neither was it discouraged since it helped, on the whole, to produce a greater concentration of manpower on war work.

As men were called up for the Armed Forces, large numbers in each age group were induced to leave unreserved employment for reserved employment, such as munitions work, entitling them to deferment from military service. Since the Schedule of Reserved Occupations was drawn by broad occupational blocks and was

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<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 29 July 1941, cols. 1367-1368.

narrowed down only gradually, some of these men went to reserved work which was not of special importance to the war effort; but many of them found their way to essential war work. When the Register of Protected Establishments was introduced as a refinement of the Schedule, dual ages of reservation were established for men in many occupations—a lower age of reservation applying to men in protected establishments and a higher age to those in unprotected establishments. As a result, many men between the two ages who were employed in unprotected establishments were led to transfer to employment in protected establishments.

Moreover, in raising the age of reservation in particular occupations, attention was sometimes given to encouraging some of the men affected to transfer to war work. In the electrical trades, for example, the age of reservation for certain types of workers was raised from 21-25 to 30-35 in December 1940; but if the work on which a particular electrician was engaged was proved to be essential, he could not be called up for service, even in his own trade, as a general rule—a condition which was intended to encourage electrical workers to move into essential work. Similarly, in the printing trades a communication from an official of the Ministry of Labour to the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation, dated 31 October 1940, says in regard to the notice of the Ministry's intention to increase the age of reservation from 30 to 35 years:

As the effect of this will be that men affected will be liable to be called up for the Armed Forces at any time after 1st December, and may therefore be counted as lost to the industry in any case, I think you will agree that it would be useful if we asked the men affected whether they would like to transfer over to munitions work or take a course of training with a view to securing such work. We would advise any men who decide to take advantage of this opportunity to get in touch with the Employment Exchange which in turn would arrange for the men's transfer under the J.I.C.<sup>1</sup> scheme.<sup>2</sup>

The *Printing Federation Bulletin* pointed out that the Ministry had assured the Union that men released for military service under these conditions could be transferred to munitions work or to the Government training scheme if they were able to secure any such employment or opportunity for training before enlistment notices were served on them. It urged men who wished to take advantage of this arrangement to communicate with the special joint committee for their area, their trade union representative, or the manager of their local employment exchange.

<sup>1</sup> The J.I.C. (Joint Industrial Council) is a permanent national committee made up of representatives of employers and workers in the printing industry, created for joint discussion of the industry's problems.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in the *Printing Federation Bulletin*, November 1940, p. 6.

As a rule, men registered for military service can be accepted for training only if they have been placed in Grade III or IV by the Army Medical Boards. Changes made at different times in the age of reservation for different occupations have, however, involved changes in the eligibility conditions. For instance, certain men affected at a particular stage of de-reservation, or certain men in specified registration groups who were not reserved under the Schedule, were brought under review for transfer to war work or for training if they belonged to a certain age group (*e.g.* if they had been born before 1 January 1903). These exceptions usually applied for a limited period only, and the men concerned were asked to choose between transfer to war work, including training for such work, and service with the Forces.

Finally, with the gradual abolition of the system of reservation by occupational blocks and its replacement by a system of individual deferment on the basis of each man's job, further stimulus was given to transference to vital war work. At this stage, however, the transfer of individual workers to munitions work was directly organised instead of being left to voluntary action, and the element of choice was almost entirely eliminated.<sup>1</sup>

#### DISLOCATION UNEMPLOYMENT

Labour transference had also been taking place as a partial solution for the dislocations of employment that had arisen as a result of the development of the war economy as a whole. Shortages of raw materials, shipping difficulties, limitations of supplies for certain less essential industries, loss of export markets, and import controls, for example, had all caused unemployment in a variety of industries and had been forcing the transference of factory-trained labour from non-essential to essential work. In the cotton industry, faced with a shortage of raw cotton, committees were set up in some areas to arrange for the transfer of operatives to munitions work; in the printing trades, with a shortage of paper, *ad hoc* committees were established to organise the transfer of unemployed printers to munitions work; and in the coalmining industry, which had lost export markets, thousands of unemployed miners were moving to training centres for munitions work or to other types of essential work or services. Each industry had to meet its own special problems, and to work out for itself the extent to which transference was necessary to meet the unemployment or under-employment problem. Although the first expedient of many such industries was to adopt a spread-the-work policy,

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<sup>1</sup> See pp. 36-40 below.

transfers of workers became necessary in order to alleviate distress. Large numbers of workers drifted voluntarily away from industries in which operations were being curtailed. In other cases, the selection of workers for transfer to war work was arranged by representatives of the employers and workers affected, with the help of the employment exchanges.

In the printing industry, for example, an emergency meeting of employers' and workers' representatives was held soon after the war broke out, at which it was agreed that short time should be worked to prevent extensive dismissals of labour. The industry gradually lost men, however, to the Armed Forces, to Civil Defence, and to war industry, so that short time was much reduced. The war in Finland changed the situation again, by imposing a shortage of raw material; there was an extension of the short-time system, "and in spite of the generally accepted sharing of work, the figure of unemployed reached alarming proportions". *Ad hoc* joint committees were set up in different towns and cities in order to transfer printers to munitions work; and by the end of July 1940 it was reported that over 1,500 printing trade operatives had been placed in other employment, mainly in engineering.<sup>1</sup> The committees continued their work, and in November of the same year the *Printing Federation Bulletin* pointed with some pride to the results of their activity, declaring:

Naturally there are difficulties standing in the way of complete success, but something is being done at any rate to make the scheme run smoothly, and to remove some of the apathy displayed by the munitions employers and, to a certain extent, by the members of our unions. We have gone as far as we can in the transfer of employed labour to munitions; the phase of the problem now being tackled is the transference of unemployed labour to areas where it is wanted.<sup>2</sup>

By the end of the first year of war, paper supplies had been stabilised, but printing trades workers were continuing to move to munitions work. The *Natsopa Journal* noted that new problems were arising:

In some branches of the trade there was now an actual shortage of workers in some areas, with a surplus in other areas. The transfer of the unemployed to other towns was not an easy task, for once they had signed on for State benefit at the employment exchanges every inducement was offered them to take a job in a munitions factory. This problem of transfer was accentuated by the damage suffered by London printing houses, whose work had to be sent to any town where there were facilities to produce it.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Labour*, December 1940.

<sup>2</sup> *Printing Federation Bulletin*, November 1940, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Natsopa Journal*, February 1941, pp. 2-3.

By the spring of 1941, the principal unions in the printing trades "could trace at least 6,000 male workers who had definitely gone to munitions".<sup>1</sup> Union officials reported that the transfers had taken place without difficulty and to the satisfaction of the men affected.

Dislocation unemployment never reached very large proportions and the problem had almost disappeared by the end of 1940. Along with the growth of the war effort, new pockets of unemployment and under-employment have developed in certain areas and in certain industries, but these have generally been of very short duration and the workers thrown out of employment or placed on short time have quickly been absorbed into munitions work or as substitutes for others entering munitions work.

### WAGES

One of the most important conditions for the success of a movement of voluntary transfer from non-essential to essential activity is a wage structure which makes employment in war industries consistently more attractive than employment in non-war industries. The President of the Board of Trade called attention to the wage incentive to voluntary transfer in May 1941, stating:

There is inevitably, I think, in the economic structure of a country at war a pull between long-established industries and the new, almost mushroom, industries which grow up to produce the munitions of war. It is idle to suppose that if the great drive of munitions production is attained, there will not always be disparity in wages between those industries. Production has to be got. The conditions under which piece rates have to be fixed are largely uncertain. I can think of no country which has been at war in this century which has avoided a disparity of wages between its new munitions industries and its old industries.<sup>2</sup>

To some extent, the British wage structure tended, particularly in the early stages of the war, to give an impetus to the transfer of labour to war industries. On the other hand, it has always been true that many important factors have been operative to prevent wages in essential industries from constituting an effective incentive to transfer to war work, and indeed wages have often been a tremendous impediment to the movement of labour towards essential activity.<sup>3</sup> But despite these factors, the wages paid on many

<sup>1</sup> *London Typographical Journal*, April 1941, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 28 May 1941, col. 1880.

<sup>3</sup> The policy of the Government has been to avoid, as far as possible and wherever possible, any interference with the fixing of wages through collective bargaining. In the case of persons forced by the Ministry of Labour to transfer to other work, the Ministry has insisted that the rate for the job, fixed by collective agreement, be paid. While this solved some problems, it raised a variety of others. (See pp. 103-111 below.)



types of war work have encouraged considerable transference to these types of work. Wages were used by employers as a major weapon in the widespread competition for labour that was characteristic of the first year of war; and employers in essential industries made continuous efforts to entice various types of skilled workers to their employment by the offer of special bonuses and remuneration over and above the regular wages fixed for the occupation and district by collective agreement. Many non-essential trades suffered from dislocations of one kind or another, leading to spread-the-work policies, reduced incomes for their workers, and transference away from these industries. In addition, large numbers of workers saw that their earnings could be vastly increased by the longer hours and special overtime rates in essential industries.

The influx of workers seeking better wages did not affect all war industries equally. Wages in coalmines and shipyards, for example, have been distinct obstacles to a movement of labour towards those industries, and wage rates at first stayed relatively low in the royal ordnance factories; on the other hand, those in the aircraft industry have risen considerably. Moreover, wages paid for certain types of non-essential work were high enough or were raised to a sufficiently high level to continue to attract labour to these types of work. Thus, the transference which took place was not always from non-essential to essential work, but often from essential to other essential work and sometimes to far less essential work. Nevertheless, as a whole, there was a continuing movement of labour towards war industries, deriving primarily from the greater possibilities of financial gain in these industries.

Enquiries made by the Ministry of Labour show wide variations among the principal industry groups in the amount and percentage of increase in average earnings between October 1938 and January 1942. Although the figures published cover all types of manual workers (including skilled and unskilled wage earners) and are affected by a number of factors not mentioned here, they nevertheless indicate the difference between the earnings in munitions industries and non-munitions industries. Average weekly earnings for men in the engineering and shipbuilding group of industries were 102s. 5d. in July 1940 and 119s. 2d. in January 1942, while the corresponding figures for men in public utility service were 70s. 8d. and 79s. 9d.; in paper and printing, 83s. 11d. and 101s. 3d.; and in clothing, 71s. 10d. and 85s. 0d. Between October 1938 and January 1942, the increase in average earnings in the paper and printing group was only about 20 per cent. for men and under 23 per cent. for women, while it was 59 per cent. for men and 61 per cent. for women in the engineering and shipbuilding industries.



The percentage change in average weekly earnings in July 1940, July 1941 and January 1942 as compared with October 1938 is indicated in the following table:

PERCENTAGE INCREASES IN AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS, JULY 1940  
AND 1941 AND JANUARY 1942 COMPARED WITH OCTOBER 1938

Industry or industry group	Percentage increase as compared with last pay-week of October 1938					
	Men (one week)			Women (one week)		
	July 1940	July 1941 <sup>1</sup>	Jan. 1942	July 1940	July 1941 <sup>1</sup>	Jan. 1942
Iron, stone, etc., min- ing and quarrying..	24.7	40.4	35.4	—	—	—
Brick, pottery and glass.....	23.2	40.2	40.6	18.6	38.9	43.4
Chemicals and ex- plosives.....	28.6	44.4	46.2	14.6	40.7	53.5
Iron and steel tubes..	36.8	49.1	58.4	22.7	52.4	70.5
Marine engineering..	35.0	44.1	47.5	—	—	—
Motor vehicle, cycle and aircraft manu- facture and repair..	38.0 <sup>2</sup>	53.4	65.7	25.0 <sup>2</sup>	36.6	54.3
Shipbuilding and re- pairing.....	47.3	66.3	61.1	—	—	—
Total, metal and en- gineering group....	36.6	48.7	58.9	31.5	47.4	60.8
Hosiery.....	15.2	23.1	26.7	10.2	18.3	25.1
Total, textile indus- tries.....	32.5	42.5	47.6	27.3	32.3	36.5
Building and contract- ing.....	28.7	46.3	27.5	—	—	—
Public utility services.	12.0	23.0	26.4	25.3	33.6	38.9
Government factories	40.9	47.3	53.7	18.2	20.7	31.5
Paper and printing industries.....	0.4	15.9	—	3.2	17.0	—

<sup>1</sup> Figures for July 1941 are unrevised. The revised figures for the industry groups (but not for the individual industries) may be found in the *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, December 1941, p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> Incomplete returns; if complete, would probably have been considerably higher.

Source: *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, November and December 1940, March and November 1941, and June 1942.

### MODIFICATION OF THE DEFINITION OF "SUITABLE EMPLOYMENT" UNDER THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE SCHEME

Regulations were issued during 1940 to bring the unemployment insurance scheme into conformity with the necessity for inter-industry and inter-local mobility among the unemployed labour reserve.<sup>1</sup> Under the Regulations, dated 5 July, any unemployed worker who refuses to take work of national importance offered him by an employment exchange (or other authorised representative of the Minister of Labour) is disqualified for benefit for a period of not longer than six weeks. Work certified to be of national importance may not be refused by the worker in question as "unsuitable", if it is paid at standard rates and is on standard working conditions, merely because the worker has previously been employed at better rates of wages or conditions of work, or, if he has been unemployed for at least two weeks, merely because the work offered to him is outside his usual occupation.

### PERSUASION AND APPEAL

These measures were accompanied by continuous appeals from the Minister of Labour for the transfer of labour—of skilled labour, above all—to war work. The Inspectors of Labour Supply were trying to persuade employers to release as many of their skilled workers as they could spare, either temporarily or permanently, for essential work or for even more vital war work. Skilled workers who considered that their skills were not fully utilised in their present jobs were urged to notify their trade union or the employment exchange of their position. Employers engaged in the production of munitions were requested to tell an employment exchange whenever any of their workers were to be on idle time, suspended or discharged. "The most effective use of the available reserve of labour is absolutely necessary to promote the greater efficiency of the war effort, and the Minister hopes that all employers concerned will co-operate", a leaflet of the Ministry of Labour and National Service stated in August 1940.

On the whole, during this period of the war, appeal was made largely to the skilled labour resources of the country. Not only were workers with skills adapted to war industries urged to make full use of them in war work, but skilled workers in other trades

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<sup>1</sup> The Unemployment Insurance (Emergency Powers) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations, 1940, S.R. & O. 1940, No. 1235. At the same time, the fourth statutory condition for the receipt of unemployment benefit was amended to read that "if the Minister has required him to attend at an authorised course, he proves either that he duly attended in accordance with the requirement or that he had good cause for not so doing".

were urged to apply their training in some kind of essential work. An interesting speech of the Minister of Labour in May 1941 called attention to the relative ease with which a skilled craftsman could convert his skill to that required for another job. One of the most striking features of the war, he said, was the proof it had given of the applicability of craft. A man trained in one craft with a sense of measurement and touch could be trained in another craft in a very short time. Realisation of that had led him to the conclusion that, before absolutely green labour was introduced into essential industries, every available craftsman should be converted. He was brought to this conclusion not only because of the rapidity with which skilled craftsmen could be trained but also because it would help to solve the serious problems connected with the demobilisation of war industries at the end of the war.<sup>1</sup>

In meeting the need for additional shipbuilding and ship-repairing workers, for example, carpenters, joiners, pattern-makers and cabinet makers proved to be capable recruits for such jobs as deck-laying, caulking and the shoring of decks; motor mechanics were used to perform some of the work done by fitters and turners; shipyard electricians could be recruited from a variety of trades; and ex-blacksmiths proved to be promising material for ship smith's work. "It is not generally realised how many classes of workmen can help to fill the gaps in the ranks of shipwrights", the Ministry of Labour stated.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, one of the main tasks of the labour supply organisation, at all levels, has been to be sufficiently imaginative, ingenious and alert to remedy deficiencies in skill by finding workers whose skills could be converted quickly to meet the requirements of a particular job in essential industry that had to be filled urgently.

Moreover, some trade unions, in agreeing upon schemes for the dilution of skill, have given preference to skilled workers from other trades. This was the case, for example, in the dilution agreement reached by the Boilermakers' and Shipbuilders' Society with the Shipbuilding Employers' Federation.<sup>3</sup> In addition, trade unions whose members have been forced by unemployment to transfer to other work have called attention in many cases to the greater use of "machine-minded" workers for war work. *The Tailor and Garment Worker*, for instance, urged garment workers, in registering at an employment exchange, "to make a special

<sup>1</sup> Address at the lunch given by the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation to the Delegates at the 40th Annual Conference of the Administrative Council, London, 15 May 1941, summarised in the *Printing Federation Bulletin*, May 1941, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Engineering Bulletin*, July 1941, pp. 31-34.

<sup>3</sup> *Labour*, November 1940, p. 647.

point of their qualifications as machine workers and their aptitude for some of the skilled occupations available in the war trades", adding that "many of the garment workers are capable of learning very quickly other technical processes, and are specially eligible for training for wartime work under the Ministry's training schemes".<sup>1</sup>

Much of this transfer of skilled workers caused considerable inconvenience and sacrifice to the workers affected and to their employers as well. Pressure was tremendous, the machinery for organising transfers was relatively undeveloped, and the social problems involved in transference (allowances, lodging, food and welfare) had not yet been faced. As the Minister of Labour said in September 1940, however, despite these problems, the new machinery swung into action effectively during the hectic summer months:

It has been necessary in many cases to move men from one employer to another and from one district to another and to insist upon drastic methods [for economising in the use of skilled labour] being adopted in many of the works. In many cases it has been irksome to the workers and in certain cases it has meant financial loss, but even in these cases the necessity has been recognised and there has been a generous response. It has been possible to make better arrangements than could be done at the inception for the selection of the men who are to be transferred, and such irritation as might have existed I trust will now have been removed.<sup>2</sup>

#### INADEQUACY OF INDIRECT METHODS OF LABOUR TRANSFERENCE

The influence of these various factors in encouraging the transfer of workers to essential industries is not measurable, nor were many details made available (for reasons of national security) concerning the size of the movement of labour to essential work. In September 1940, the Minister of Labour and National Service declared: "We are not in a position to give you the figures of the transference of labour from peace-time to wartime production—I am quite certain you would be amazed, but I do not propose to satisfy the enemy on that point."<sup>3</sup> At the same time, however, the extension of the need for the diversion of labour resources to essential work began to bring out clearly the limits of possible achievement through indirect methods of transfer.

There was some criticism, in the latter part of 1940, of the continued reliance of the Government on voluntary persuasion and

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<sup>1</sup> *The Tailor and Garment Worker* (Leeds), December 1940, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> "Industry and the War Effort" (speech of the Minister of Labour and National Service to the Works Management Association, 18 September 1940), in *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, October 1940, p. 260.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261.

indirect measures to secure the transfer of labour from non-war to war uses. For example, the Select Committee on National Expenditure noted with some concern that one "unexpected result" had come about as a result of the check placed on the enticement of workers in the engineering trades:

"Poaching" seems to some extent to have been stopped, but both Departments and private employers complain that there is now a standstill of labour, particularly of skilled men. The reason for this appears to be that the Ministry of Labour are only using their compulsory powers to a very minor extent. It is their policy to proceed by agreement and the instructions given to their local inspectors are that they are only to use their full powers if absolutely necessary. The Sub-Committee [on Supply Services] concur that agreement, if it is possible, is better than compulsion, but they consider that care should be observed that undue delicacy in this matter should not be allowed to cause unnecessary and harmful delay in getting maximum production.<sup>1</sup>

The Minister of Labour continued to reiterate his preference for voluntary co-operative effort, however. "Great powers have been conferred upon my Department", he said, "but my answer to people who seek compulsory methods is that if you have compulsion you have got to undertake selection, and, clever as you are, you are apt to select the wrong people as against volunteers..."<sup>2</sup> Yet with each month that passed, the need for the transfer of resources from non-essential to essential activity was increasing steadily, bringing into relief the growing inadequacy of indirect methods to secure an optimum allocation of labour resources for war purposes. The Services were demanding more men, skilled and unskilled, as further equipment and training facilities were made available. New munitions factories were nearing completion and almost ready to start production. The number of unemployed workers was shrinking; yet workers released from non-essential industries as a result of employment dislocations were not being absorbed into essential industries as quickly and as automatically as had been hoped. Many workers were reluctant to leave their own industries, even though their work was of no great importance for national defence. Employers tended to hoard their labour force, particularly their skilled men, even though they had no suitable work for them to do. There was an acute shortage of skilled labour, but the training centres were not filled to capacity. To an increasing extent, moreover, the available supply of labour was located in areas where the demand for additional war workers was not most urgent. Finally, even the limited amount of inter-local labour transfer that was taking place was creating difficult

<sup>1</sup> *Third Report from the Select Committee on National Expenditure*, Session 1940-41, London, 1941, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 11 December 1940.

problems of lodging, welfare, food and transportation, none of which had yet been grappled with effectively.

As a result, there was a growing consciousness of the need for a more large-scale and a more highly organised transference movement than had hitherto taken place. The indirect methods in force during 1940 were no longer adequate to the imperious labour demands forecast for 1941. In the winter of 1940-41, therefore, the Government entered into negotiations with the representatives of employers' and workers' organisations in order to make plans for supplying the additional workers needed by essential industries and to remobilise the country's labour resources in response to the changed requirements of the manpower situation.

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### III. DIRECT ORGANISATION OF TRANSFERENCE

"In the next six months we shall have for the first time an intense demand upon our manpower and woman-power", the Prime Minister declared in January 1941. "This is the problem that lies before us. We are now about to enter, for the first time in this war, the period of manpower stringency, because for the first time we are going to have the apparatus and the lay-out which this manpower and woman-power will be required to handle." The Prime Minister told the House of Commons of "the great tide of new factories which are rising to a productive level", and continued: "As these plants come into operation, the construction services—the builders and those who lay on the water, light and power and make the communications—will depart and the munition workers will have to be assembled."<sup>1</sup>

The Minister of Labour outlined his plans for assembling the munition workers. "We propose to meet this position broadly in two ways (he said)—by tapping our unused resources and by ensuring that our labour force is employed to the fullest possible advantage."<sup>2</sup> From a practical standpoint, a series of steps were proposed to extend controls over dismissals and resignations, to widen the scope of compulsory registration, to transfer factory-trained workers from less essential industries to war work, to replace men with women, to organise the employment of the reserve of woman-power, and to redistribute the limited supply of skilled engineering workers.

The Government's proposals for carrying out its manpower programme were approved by the national Joint Consultative Committee of employers' and workers' representatives and began to be put into effect in March 1941. They were, in part, an extension of policy developed during the earlier period of the war, but in part they marked a change of policy in response to a reassessment of the total manpower position. The Essential Work Orders, while a logical development from the past, radically modified the employment controls adopted earlier in the war and have been an interesting experiment in industrial relations and in regulating the mobility of labour in accordance with national requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 22 January 1941, cols. 266-267.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 January 1941, col. 94.

The widening of the scope of compulsory registration extended a policy which had already been well developed. The scheme for concentrating less essential production and thereby freeing labour for war work had been foreshadowed during 1940, but it included new principles to correspond to the growing stringency of the employment market. The machinery for mobilising women and placing them in war work was built up and strengthened gradually with the accumulation of experience and the ever-increasing need for women munitions workers.

The Government reiterated its intention to carry out this programme by co-operative action, not by force. The Minister of Labour and National Service stated that his mandatory powers would continue to be kept in reserve "as sanctions in the background".<sup>1</sup> The Government was anxious to rely first and foremost on joint action by employers and workers in the industries concerned and to cast itself in the role of a directive agent, using persuasion where possible, pressure where advisable, and compulsion only where necessary.

This view of the execution of policy corresponded to the view of a large section of the trade union movement. Although eager to overcome obstacles to efficient production, the trade unions continued to be reluctant to accept anything savouring of "industrial conscription" until, first, it could be proved to be necessary to meet the needs of the concrete situation, and, second, it could be shown that the "conscription" extended throughout the whole machinery of production and to management, and not to labour alone. The Amalgamated Engineering Union, for example, called attention in strong terms to production bottlenecks caused by inefficiencies in management, in the allocation of contracts, the supply and flow of raw materials, machine tools, production planning and the utilisation of plant capacity. Its *Monthly Journal* declared, in February 1941:

We know, and so does the Minister of Labour, that the fullest and best use of labour already recruited and in training for the war industries is not being made now. Cases can be cited of factories and workshops where the plant is not working to capacity, but not because labour of the right sort is lacking. Daily we have complaints of highly qualified and competent workers standing around waiting for materials, or for orders to execute. The anomaly of short-time working, on the one hand, and of excessive overtime on the other, is still to be found in the most vital and essential of the war trades, even in aircraft production. . . It is not the supply of labour but the demand for it in the war trades that the Ministries should tackle first and more energetically.

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<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 21 January 1941, col. 89.

The official magazine of the Trades Union Congress (*Labour*) stated editorially in the same month<sup>1</sup>:

The General Council are not satisfied . . . that the skill and energy of the workers at present engaged in vital war industries is being used to the best advantage at the present time. There have been too many complaints of under-employment and short-time in these industries to warrant any easy acquiescence in the extension of industrial compulsion, unless the maximum output can be obtained from those already engaged in the industries concerned.

These points of view were recognised by the Government to be wholly reasonable. Therefore, efforts to mobilise and to redistribute manpower have been accompanied by efforts to spread the thin layer of skilled labour over the industrial structure in jobs where it can be most useful, to iron out difficulties in the planning and organisation of production, and to encourage war establishments to develop their own techniques for utilising the labour supply made available to them and stabilised for them by employment controls. This has involved further attempts to find ways of using rare skills to the full, to convert non-war plant and equipment to war work wherever possible, to improve the methods of allotting contracts, to extend sub-contracting, to develop capacity clearing centres, to plan the location of new factories or plant expansion with full regard to labour supply, and to develop better machinery for labour-management collaboration on production questions. This type of activity helps to limit the need for transfer of workers and to bring work to them rather than to transfer them away from the work, on the one side, and on the other, it strengthens the morale of the workers asked or required to transfer by giving them evidence that their transfer is really necessary and useful in the interests of output instead of an unnecessary sacrifice that could have been avoided by better production planning.

#### PREREQUISITES FOR ORGANISED TRANSFERENCE

In organising the transfer of workers to war industries, a number of steps had to be taken to establish the conditions which are a prerequisite for orderly labour redistribution. A first essential was the creation and maintenance of widespread employment controls. Secondly, a working system of priorities for the allocation of labour to particular industries and firms had to be developed and the needs to be met by transference analysed. Finally, the human resources available for meeting the requirements of war industries had to be explored and classified.

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<sup>1</sup> *Labour*, February 1941, p. 740.

*(a) Employment Controls*

The mobilisation and transfer of war workers has taken place within a broad frame of employment controls. Orders restricting engagement have brought the hiring of most war workers under the direct control of the employment exchanges, and the Essential Work Orders have introduced control over dismissal and voluntary leaving of employment. As has already been indicated, these measures were introduced and strengthened gradually—and often somewhat in retard of the need for them. Had an attempt been made to introduce them all at one time, however, the result could only have been to throw an impossible administrative task on the labour supply machinery that was already overburdened.

Restrictions on engagement now apply to employers and workers in building and civil engineering, in the large group of general engineering industries, in electrical installation, in ship-building and repairing and in coalmining, and, in addition, to all women between the ages of 18 and 30 inclusive. With certain exceptions, no employer covered by the Orders may engage workers except through an employment exchange; and no worker covered by them may find employment in those industries except through an exchange. The procedure is relatively simple. The worker obtains a special two-part card from the exchange when sent to a new job; he gives the card to the employer; the latter fills it out (stating whether or not he has engaged the worker), returns one half to the exchange for completing its files and keeps the other half as proof that he has engaged a worker submitted to him by the exchange. Few difficulties now arise in enforcing these restrictions on engagement. The great majority of employers and workers have become well accustomed to finding labour or jobs through the exchanges and accept the procedure as a practical necessity without complaint. There are only a few cases in which employers attempt to transfer workers from one firm to another without routing the transaction through an exchange and in which workers attempt to find employment without passing through an exchange.

In undertakings scheduled under the Essential Work Orders, dismissal (except for serious misconduct) and leaving of employment are subjected to the consent of a National Service Officer. Scheduling of undertakings has proceeded slowly; but by the middle of 1942 almost all important munitions and a good many non-munitions firms had been scheduled. Altogether about 7,000,000 workers are in undertakings scheduled under the Orders and their movement from one job to another is therefore con-

trolled. Although the application of the Orders checks unregulated migration of labour, nothing in the Orders affects the powers of the National Service Officers to issue directions to workers in scheduled undertakings and to withdraw labour from them as required.

If a worker in a scheduled firm wishes to leave his job, he fills out a standard application form giving particulars of his age, work, his reasons for wishing to leave, etc. He is advised to obtain the employer's comments on his application; if he does not do so, the National Service Officer forwards the form to the employer with a request for his views. On the basis of these statements, the National Service Officer must decide, within a specified time, whether or not the worker should be given permission to leave his employment. He may ask for further information about the man's application from other officials of the Ministry of Labour (in particular, from the Inspectors of Labour Supply) and from the representatives of the production departments. The National Service Officer gives his decision; and if the worker is dissatisfied with it, he has the right of appeal to a tripartite local appeal board.

Applications to change employment are most often made on personal grounds. For women, household responsibilities are a general cause for applications to leave one job for another, to leave employment altogether, or to take up part-time rather than whole-time work. For men, usual grounds for applications to change jobs are health considerations<sup>1</sup> and better opportunities for the use and development of individual skills. Other factors being equal, better wages alone are not sufficient cause for a National Service Officer to agree to a worker's transfer. If, however, the worker claims that he could make better use of his skill elsewhere, and if this claim is corroborated by other evidence, then the transfer is generally facilitated. Each case has to be dealt with on its individual merits, however; and the guiding principles laid down by the headquarters of the Ministry have to be interpreted with great flexibility and common sense by the local National Service Officers.

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<sup>1</sup> If the National Service Officer is not satisfied that a worker should not remain in his present employment for health reasons, he may call in an independent doctor to examine him (generally the doctor employed by the local post office to certify sickness among postal workers). The present system of obtaining and checking medical certificates is not, however, considered to be satisfactory. There has apparently been some misuse of these certificates. It has been suggested that industrial medical boards, similar to military medical boards, might be created and made responsible for giving a considered opinion on the validity of a man's claim to change jobs for health reasons.

A good many difficulties have arisen in applying this general procedure. For one thing, the National Service Officers, in granting permission to leave employment, have frequently had to make decisions in regard to the relative priority of two different jobs. These Officers, although themselves employment exchange officials, often spend their full time dealing with applications from workers to leave employment or from employers to dismiss workers and are therefore not engaged directly on the placement side of the work. By consulting the placement officers and the Inspectors of Labour Supply, National Service Officers can help to determine in which of two jobs a man is most needed; but in practice they have been too overburdened so far to be able to investigate the cases as completely as is really necessary to ensure correct decisions.

A further difficulty has arisen from the fact that once a worker was granted permission to leave his employment, he did not always enter the particular employment which he had stated that he intended to go to if his application to change jobs was allowed. Now, therefore, it is made clear that the permission of a National Service Officer applies only to leaving employment and is not to be taken as permission to enter any other employment. This means, as a rule, that the worker must find his employment through the employment exchange, which is in a position to direct him to the employment of most importance. A related problem is that some workers, after receiving permission to leave employment, have disappeared completely. In order to check this drift, a worker making application to leave his job must now state his National Registration Identity Number; this makes it possible for the employment exchange to investigate his whereabouts and the character of his work.

Another difficulty has been a tendency among employers to assume that, because they are scheduled under the Essential Work Orders, none of their workers may be taken away from their employment. This erroneous belief has given the National Service officers a good deal of trouble, and it has been dissipated only as the individual employers have gained a clearer idea of their rights and obligations under the Orders.

Finally, the employment controls of the Essential Work Orders have met with criticism from employers and workers alike on the ground that they have tended to immobilise labour a little too much. Employers complain that they have been forced to continue to employ "misfits", and workers complain that they have been forced to remain in a particular firm regardless of whether they might do better work elsewhere. This criticism has probably been founded in fact in some instances; but instead of abolishing

employment controls, which few of the critics consider either possible or desirable, the answer probably lies in improving the machinery for moving workers from one job to another. This improvement is taking place as the National Service Officers become less overburdened with arrears of work and accumulate experience in dealing with the applications for changing jobs.

(b) *Determination of Labour Preferences*

While labour transference could not have been organised on a large scale in the absence of comprehensive employment controls, other prerequisites for orderly transference are, first, a working system of priorities, both for production and for labour, and second, a method of confining the needs to be met by transference within as narrow limits as possible. If the first factor is ignored, there is no method of assuring that the labour made available through transference is directed to the work which is most urgent, and the primary purpose of labour redistribution may be defeated. If the second factor is ignored, industry may be unnecessarily dislocated and dissatisfaction will arise among workers asked to make needless sacrifices.

The methods used for determining the priority to be accorded in placing skilled men, unskilled men and women in war work have been changed considerably as the war economy has developed and as the shortage of man and woman power has become more acute. At first, little was done to deal with the priority problem. Later, the Production Executive (a committee of the Ministers of the Supply Departments with the Minister of Labour as chairman) was made responsible for determining the priority to be given different types of munitions production. The decisions of this Executive were transmitted to the Regional Controllers of the Ministry of Labour and to the local employment exchange officials; and the Inspectors of Labour Supply were told to find men who could transfer to these types of work from less essential work. With the further development of the war economy, it gradually became apparent that production priority was not always synonymous with labour priority and that the bottlenecks for the one did not always prove to be the bottlenecks for the other. Moreover, the majority of the skilled men who could move to war work from less essential work or from no work at all had already been transferred or placed. It thus became necessary to establish a system of labour preferences as distinct from production priorities.

For this purpose, a sub-committee of the Labour Supply Coordinating Committee was set up towards the end of 1941 to fix

the preference for labour to be given to individual firms engaged in important war production. This sub-committee consists of headquarters representatives of the Supply Departments and the Ministry of Labour, and meets regularly once every two weeks. On the basis of information gathered from the regional representatives of the Supply Departments and of the Ministry of Labour, the sub-committee draws up a relatively short preference list of firms (grouped under types of production) engaged in important war work which are, in the sub-committee's opinion, most in need of labour; and it also specifies whether the preference is for skilled or unskilled men or for women. Particulars of the firms given this headquarters preference, together with the character of the preference, are circulated to all the regions; and labour made available must be placed in these firms first. If a region cannot fill a certain number of its own requirements because of an extremely difficult labour supply position, it notifies the headquarters of the Ministry of Labour of this fact and these vacancies are apportioned among other regions which must give them the same preference as they give to their own preference firms. This system has been operating with increasing effectiveness and has proved to be of great value in eliminating difficulties in granting preference in the allocation of both skilled and unskilled labour.

In addition to this list of headquarters vacancies, each region may establish a regional preference list of firms at the request of the regional or local representatives of the Supply Departments. Vacancies for these firms can be filled, however, only after efforts have been made to fill the vacancies on the headquarters preference list. Some regions have not established regional preferences, largely on the ground that the headquarters vacancies are so numerous that available labour must be directed towards filling them and regional lists would have little practical value at the moment.

Over and above the vacancies given headquarters or regional preference, however, are what are known as bottleneck vacancies. As their name implies, they are key vacancies which must be filled immediately. They are circulated urgently to all regions and must be given priority over all other vacancies. This procedure for giving first priority to bottleneck vacancies lends a needed flexibility to the arrangements for filling preference vacancies and for filling others which, although of special importance, may not yet have been placed on the headquarters list.

In addition to these preference arrangements, and within their general frame, a scheme has been worked out which is used primarily



to direct the transfer and placement of women workers and secondarily for more general purposes. The country is divided into four different kinds of areas (each area corresponding to an employment exchange area):

(1) Scarlet areas, *i.e.* those in which the supply of women (both mobile and immobile) is inadequate to existing demand and which must therefore import women workers;

(2) Red areas, *i.e.* those in which the existing demand for women is virtually balanced by the supply of women within the area and which therefore neither export nor import women workers;

(3) Green and amber areas, *i.e.* those in which the supply of immobile women is sufficient to meet local demands and which have a surplus of mobile women who are available for transfer.

In scarlet and red areas, all mobile and immobile women are placed locally in preference vacancies. Mobile women from green and amber areas are transferred out of these areas to fill preference vacancies in scarlet areas. Each administrative region of the Ministry of Labour is characterised as a demand or a supply region; and a demand region is linked with one or more particular supply regions. In any supply region, mobile women are first sent to preference jobs in scarlet areas in their own region; after these vacancies have been filled, they are sent to work in scarlet areas in the demand region linked with theirs.

The colouring of the areas as either scarlet, red, amber or green is based on an analysis of various factors which contribute directly or indirectly to the labour supply and demand position of each area. The process is interesting because it serves as one of the bases for the development of labour redistribution policy as a whole and for the planning of certain aspects of the production programme. The first factor taken into account is the total population of the area and its trend. The figures used are the Ministry of Food figures for three dates (September 1939, September 1940 and the latest month available). The next factor is the insured population of the area and its trend. These figures are found by analysing the unemployment books (which are exchanged for new ones in July of each year) for July 1939, July 1940 and July 1941 (or 1942, when available). Aside from examining the trend of these two sets of figures, certain conclusions can be drawn from the proportion of the insured population to the total population in any particular area. For the country as a whole, it is estimated that about one-third of the total population is insured. If in a given area the insured population is below one-third, and

if no special factors explain this, there is good reason for assuming that the possibilities of labour supply in the area have not been fully exhausted. If the insured population is more than one-third of the total population, and no special features are present, then local labour resources are likely to be almost completely exhausted. This information is examined in conjunction with all the data (a) from the registration and interviewing of women, (b) on the concentration of production scheme, and (c) on the placement of contracts. These items, taken all together, are then compared with the estimated labour demand which must be met in the current quarter.<sup>1</sup>

The survey as a whole provides a very useful indication of the labour supply position in any given area. Tested against what is actually happening (as is done), and with experience to assist in its interpretation, it not only provides the clues for determining the "colour" to be given to any particular area but it also indicates untapped sources of supply. The colouring of the areas is not always strictly up to date. It is usually somewhat behind the actual labour supply situation since an area is not "promoted" into a more difficult demand category until the Ministry of Labour is satisfied that there is no alternative. The scheme needs to retain flexibility, particularly now that the demands to be met are growing more varied within the more difficult labour supply regions. Within any one region, for example, the demand in the scarlet areas may suddenly dry up but in another area, not classified as scarlet, there may be important vacancies to be filled. Under present arrangements, the mobile women being sent into the region from the supplying regions cannot be sent to the non-scarlet areas. In practice, this difficulty might be overcome by giving each region a certain amount of discretion in modifying the colouring of the areas within its borders and in allocating the labour available to the difficult places.

Although these measures influence both the extent and direction of labour transference, more direct control over the extent of transference can be exercised by supervision over the location of new industrial activity, of expansions of capacity and of contracts. From the beginning of the war, the Supply Departments have been under an obligation to consult the Minister of Labour in regard to these matters. They accept this obligation in principle but they have not always done more than that in practice. Many of the current labour supply difficulties in "bottleneck" areas

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<sup>1</sup> The regions are asked, at quarterly intervals, to send in the estimated demand for all labour, collected and analysed by the exchanges, and showing the immediate demand, additional demand for the ensuing quarter and any further anticipated demand after that quarter.

have their origin in a lack of co-ordination and consultation in the great production drive begun at the time of Dunkirk and immediately thereafter. Since then, experience has proved the necessity for closer co-operation between the Ministry of Labour and the Supply Departments; and consultation on the location of new industrial activity has become a general practice.

The real task of the Ministry of Labour, in its consultations with the Supply Departments, is, on the one hand, to divert new plants and contracts into easy labour areas and, on the other, to press for the concentration of less essential activity in the difficult areas. Other factors besides labour supply (technical considerations, transport, etc.) must be taken into account as well; and in the give and take of departmental negotiations, the Ministry of Labour does not always succeed in enforcing its policy. In practice, of course, a good deal depends in a particular case on how much of a bottleneck labour has become. Labour supply cannot always be the over-riding factor; but the bargaining power of the Ministry of Labour is increased in direct proportion to the tightness of the labour market. It is not now possible to vary the placement of many of the munitions contracts. The most direct incidence of the supervision of the Ministry of Labour over the location of orders or the carrying on of activity is therefore over a wide range of the non-munitions industries (mainly all forms of clothing, boot and shoe manufacture and some kinds of food packing and processing). Over this field, the policy of the Ministry has succeeded in altering the plans of the Supply Departments in many cases and has had an appreciable practical effect in diverting activity into easy labour supply areas and in easing the position in the most difficult areas.<sup>1</sup>

### (c) *The Extension of Registration*

A third prerequisite for organising transfers of workers is comprehensive knowledge of the human resources available for allocation to war work. Thus, the scope of compulsory industrial registration was increased in direct relation to the growing shortage of labour. Not only were additional special registrations of skilled workers carried out, but a general registration by age classes for women and for men over military age was introduced under a Registration for Employment Order of 15 March 1941.<sup>2</sup> Announcing

<sup>1</sup> A great many other factors have a direct effect on the labour requirements which can only be met by transference. It is not possible to cover them within the limits of the present report since they extend into every aspect of the planning and execution of the whole war production programme.

<sup>2</sup> S.R. & O. 1941, No. 368, dated 15 March 1941.

plans for the extensive mobilisation of labour reserves for war industry, the Minister of Labour and National Service declared that, although much had been and would continue to be achieved by voluntary means, the stage had been reached where it was necessary to have industrial registration by age groups, and "by this means to make a list of those who are to be called upon to serve the State in national industry". These registrations have provided an indispensable basis for mobilising war workers and have been a necessary supplement to the existing stock of information in the possession of the employment exchanges.

### (1) *Registration by Occupational Groups.*

The persistent and acute shortage of skilled workers led to additional special and *ad hoc* registrations of workers in particular occupational groups. The obligation to register with an employment exchange was extended to workers who were or who had been employed in shipbuilding and ship-repairing, the merchant navy, marine engineering or heavy engineering of a similar kind, and coalmining.<sup>1</sup>

The registration forms, when completed, were placed in special files in the local employment exchanges, and summary returns on them were forwarded to the headquarters of the Ministry of Labour. After analysing these returns, the headquarters staff could decide the approximate number and categories of workers who could be called upon for transfer, as required; and, on the basis of the registration cards, the local offices, with the help of the Inspectors of Labour Supply, could effect the transfers, as requested by headquarters.

In general, these compulsory registrations followed appeals for voluntary registration and transfer, the response to which had been inadequate to meet the growing needs for skilled workers. In all cases, exemption from registration was granted to men already engaged in certain kinds of vital work or service. The registration for marine engineering workers, for example, applied to all men of 20 years of age and over who had worked for 12 months or more since 1 January 1929 as fitters, turners, erectors or assemblers in marine engineering building or repairing or heavy engineering of a similar kind. Exemption from registration was granted to men in the Armed Forces (other than the Home Guard), to men employed in shipbuilding or repairing or the merchant navy and to

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<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the registration of men with experience in shipyard occupations, these registrations were carried out under the Registration for Employment Order, 1941.

men required to register under the special registration for men who had previously served in the merchant navy.

One of the primary purposes of these registrations was to uncover the large numbers of workers who had been unemployed during the long years of the depression or who had gone to other work, possibly where their skills were less essential to the war effort. As in the previous registrations of skilled workers, these registrations did not imply transference for workers who were considered to be more usefully employed in their present jobs than if transferred back to their previous occupations. They merely provided the census of labour in each "scarce" occupation that was necessary for planning the allocation of the limited supply of workers to the most vital employments.

## *(2) Registration by Age Classes.*

Under the Registration for Employment Order, a gradual survey is being made of the available labour force of the country with a view to mobilising those likely to be useful to the war effort, whether in employment or not. During 1941, all women aged 21 to 31 were registered; by June 1942 all women from the age of 18 up to the age of 41 had been registered; and those from 41 to 45 were to be registered by early October 1942. Registration is compulsory, and the obligation to register applies to all women, employed or unemployed, in any specified age class, with the exception of those engaged in full-time and paid service in the auxiliary services of the Armed Forces. Men aged 41 to 46, with certain exceptions, have also been registered under the Order; and those aged 47 to 50 are to be registered by September 1942.<sup>1</sup> For both men and women, registration is necessary whether or not the persons had already been registered in one of the special registrations for occupational groups.

These registrations have been on a compulsory basis primarily because surveys of manpower requirements had indicated that all men and women who could be made available for war work would be needed before long. In these circumstances, compulsory registration was the only practical procedure. In particular, it was essential to have a complete and accurate picture of the reserve of woman-power; and this could be compiled only through compulsory, rather than voluntary, registration.

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<sup>1</sup> These men were above military age until the National Service (No. 2) Act, which received assent in December 1941, raised the upper age limit for military service from 41 to 51, in addition to extending liability for service to women (with certain exceptions).

The form used for registration is as follows:

### NATIONAL REGISTRATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

#### SCHEDULE

1. Full name (Surname first in block caps.)	7. Male	8. Date of birth	10. Present Occupation
2. National Regn. Identity Card No.	Female	9. Married Widow(er) Single	11. Previous Occupations
3. Address (in full)	12. <i>If employed</i> state (a) Whether employed full time or part time?		
4. Are you a contributor under the Widows, Orphans and Old Age Contributory Pensions Acts.  Yes/No	(b) Whether employment is paid or unpaid?		
5. To be answered by married woman: State number of your children under 14 living with you.	(c) Name of present employer..... Address of employer..... ..... Business of Employer..... .....		
6. Employment Exchange or other Local Office at which registered (if any)	13. <i>If working on own account</i> state: Nature of business..... Number of employees.....		

This is a simple form, asking for little detail in regard to the precise occupation and previous experience of the worker, hobbies or special qualifications, etc. The Ministry of Labour has found, however, that the data obtained are sufficient for a preliminary sifting of registrants into the major classes determining the priority of interviewing and that all further information can be best obtained through a subsequent selection interview. The fact that women (especially the younger ones) are being recruited for a severely restricted list of vital war work makes it easier to discover through such a simple form the women who must be induced to transfer.

The procedure of registering men over military age and women by age classes has proved to have a number of important advant-

ages. First and foremost is the fact that when only one age class is registered at a time, registration can be followed by interviewing while the registration material is still fresh and up to date. Secondly, the age-class procedure has made it possible to use the existing staff of the employment exchanges for registration purposes without dislocating (to any considerable extent) the rest of the work of the exchanges. On the other hand, the registration and mobilisation of one age class after another might be criticised on the ground that knowledge of the labour supply is built up too gradually to make it possible to find and transfer to war work all the men and women who are easiest to transfer before taking other groups. For instance, unoccupied women aged 25 may not have been called upon while employed women aged 22 may be pressed to transfer to war work. This possible disadvantage has been largely overcome by encouraging volunteering among persons in age classes not yet compelled to register, by flexibility in the procedure for shifting employed women to war work, and by slight overlapping in the processes of registration and interviewing of the different age classes.

Registrations have been carried out by the exchanges and branch offices on Saturday afternoons as a matter of convenience both for the exchange staff and the registrants. The registration form is filled out in the exchange and is kept in its registers, filed in one of the special sub-registers according to the class into which each registrant falls. Men registered under the Armed Forces Acts were given a certificate of registration, but persons registered under the Registration for Employment Order have not been given any such certificate—an omission which has since been recognised to be a mistake because they now have no evidence testifying to the fact of their registration.

Failure to register under the Order has caused some difficulty. Systematic check-ups have indicated a very small percentage of non-registration; but even a small percentage may mean the loss of an appreciable number of potential war workers or substitutes. Attention has therefore been given to stopping the possibilities of leakage. When the Order was first applied, no master register was set up at the headquarters of the Ministry of Labour and National Service (as had been done for men registered under the Armed Forces Act); and as a result it was impossible to find and to follow up cases of non-registration. Gradually, therefore, a central alphabetical index has been built up. By checking this index against the National Register the current addresses of non-registrants can be found. Up to June 1942, there had not as yet been any case of prosecution for failure to register; once non-registrants

## PARTICULARS OF REGISTRATIONS OF WOMEN BY AGE CLASSES

Date of registration	Class	Age	Total number of registrations	Women with household duties and not otherwise employed		Women with children under 14, employed and unemployed	
				Number	Percentage of total registrations	Number	Percentage of total registrations
19 April 1941	1920	20/21	425,643	64,181	15.1	33,554	7.9
3 May 1941	1919	21/22	310,062	66,299	21.4	39,809	12.8
14 June 1941	1918	22/23	269,935	79,743	29.5	53,494	19.8
28 June 1941	1917	23/24	259,396	89,665	34.6	63,684	24.5
2 August 1941	1916	24/25	295,508	120,448	40.7	89,570	30.3
30 August 1941	1915	25/26	313,947	114,451	36.4	111,776	35.6
27 September 1941	1914	26/27	336,576	136,540	40.6	142,165	42.2
25 October 1941	1913	27/28	344,755	153,066	44.4	159,997	46.4
8 November 1941	1912	28/29	346,967	165,252	47.6	173,144	49.9
22 November 1941	1911	29/30	331,369	165,367	49.9	175,770	53.-
6 December 1941	1910	30/31	352,500	182,444	51.7	191,661	54.3
10 January 1942	1921	20/21	335,953	22,531	6.7	24,162	7.2
24 January 1942	1909	32/33	330,601	175,120	53.-	186,399	56.3
7 February 1942	1908	33/34	351,714	193,161	54.9	205,450	58.4
21 February 1942	1907	34/35	337,873	188,175	55.7	202,743	60.-
7 March 1942	1906	35/36	333,944	186,281	55.8	198,319	59.4
21 March 1942	1905	36/37	281,759				
11 April 1942	1922	19/20	269,879				
2 May 1942	1904	37/38	274,762				
	Totals		6,103,143	2,102,724	Figures not yet available.		
						2,051,697	

Source: MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE.



have been found, they no longer object to registering. Nor had there been any case of prosecution for delay in registration, primarily because no satisfactory procedure had yet been developed.

It is interesting that the mere fact of registration has been found to serve as a strong stimulus to voluntary transference to munitions and other work. This has been particularly true among women. It has caused some difficulty since there has been no guarantee that the workers who moved into or changed employment in this way would, through their own efforts, find work of the greatest national importance.

The preceding table, based on registrations of women carried out under the Registration for Employment Order, shows the total number of women registered in the various age classes and the numbers in each age class who have household responsibilities and are not otherwise employed and who have young children. The great majority of the remaining women in any age class are in employment.

#### THE REDISTRIBUTION OF MALE WORKERS

The male labour supply available for war work has been mobilised and redistributed by several inter-related methods. In the first place, men have been transferred from one industry or occupation to another by the present system of deferment from military service. In the second place, special efforts have been made to draw men with critical skills back into their former occupations. In the third place, men have been transferred under the procedures introduced by the Registration for Employment Order. Finally, within the broadly defined group of munitions industries, skilled men have been transferred from one job to another in accordance with the shifting emphases of the war production programme.

##### (a) *Transference through Policy for Deferment from Military Service*

In January 1942, the old system of reservation by occupational blocks, modified as it had been during 1941, gave way to a new system of reservation by examination of each man's case, in order to determine his indispensability to war industry.<sup>1</sup> District Manpower Boards of the Ministry of Labour and National Service are responsible for making decisions on deferment.<sup>2</sup> Men within

<sup>1</sup> For a description of the previous system under the Schedule of Reserved Occupations, see *Labour Supply and National Defence* (Montreal, International Labour Office, 1941).

<sup>2</sup> These Boards, 44 in number, consist of a Labour Supply Officer, a Military Recruiting Officer in charge of the local Military Recruiting Branch of the Ministry of Labour, a Deferment Officer, a Woman Power Officer, and a Chairman. (See pp. 146-147 below.)

industries or occupations vital to the war effort are given an opportunity to transfer to more important work before being called up for military service and, if they take up such work, are then granted deferment. The Prime Minister explained the objective of the new scheme to the House of Commons in December 1941, stating<sup>1</sup>:

In order that these District Boards may, with full knowledge, be able to give decisions, the object held in view will be twofold; first, to transfer men from less essential work to work of greater importance in the war effort, and also to obtain men to keep up the Armed Forces. Men in the munitions and other vital war industries and services who become de-reserved under the new scheme and in respect of whom deferment is not granted will, in general, be recognised as available for transfer to work of higher priority in those same industries, and a redistribution of labour within the munitions and other essential industries will be secured. This will, of course, affect only a fraction, but a very important fraction. Men in other industries, not war industries, not granted deferment, will be called up to the Forces. I am trying to keep the munitions clear of the new requirements of the Armed Forces, as far as possible.

The Minister of Labour explained that this system would facilitate a redistribution of labour aimed at concentrating key workers on vital war work. "The employer will be compelled not only to say that a man is a setter, a patternmaker, a turner, or a fitter (he said), but will have to assure us that he is working at that trade. The great complaint of skilled men has been that while they have been anxious to carry on their own trade many of them have not been used as they ought to have been used . . . We believe that under these new arrangements we shall be able to sort out, under proper conditions, the employment and use of manpower."<sup>2</sup>

At present, therefore, a ring fence has been placed around the munitions industries (which are broadly defined and include shipbuilding) and their labour force is not to be further depleted. If, for example, a clerk in a munitions factory becomes de-reserved, he is considered available for transfer to productive work instead of automatically going into the Armed Forces; and the same principle applies, with far more reason, to men already on productive work in some kind of munitions factory. In addition to this protective fence around the munitions industries, men in a specified list of critical occupations, on becoming de-reserved, are first considered for transfer to vital war work before they are called up for the Forces. If they cannot be placed in such work within a certain period, then they may be taken by the Forces, or if

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<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 2 December 1941, col. 1039.

<sup>2</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 4 December 1941, col. 1356.

they cannot be placed on munitions work in their own trade, these men might be offered the choice of either transferring to unskilled or semi-skilled work in such an industry as the iron and steel industry or going into the Forces. Men who are not in one of these critical occupations, and who do not fall under the ring fence scheme for the munitions industries, are not given the alternative of transferring to munitions work but are called up for the Forces.

Briefly, the general procedure for withdrawal is as follows: When a man in a non-vital occupation or industry becomes de-reserved, he is called for medical examination and inducted into the Forces. He is not available for transfer to other industrial work unless he is placed in medical category III or IV; and if this is the case, his papers are forwarded from the allocation office to the local exchange, and he is called for interview and placed in employment under the Registration for Employment Order procedure.<sup>1</sup> When a man in a vital occupation is de-reserved, either he himself or his employer may apply to the District Manpower Board for his deferment from service, giving full particulars of the man's work on a standard employment exchange form. If neither the man nor his employer applies for deferment, the allocation office fills out the same form and sends it on to the Manpower Board. The application for deferment is attached to the man's original registration form under the Armed Forces Acts and brought before the District Manpower Board for examination. The men for whom no application for deferment has been received are usually considered to be available for transfer; and the task of the Manpower Board is to decide in each case whether the man could do other useful industrial work. If it decides in the affirmative, his papers are forwarded to the local exchange and the exchange is given two weeks to find the man a job. If the exchange cannot place him in this period, the papers go back to the Manpower Board for reconsideration. It is assumed that if the man cannot be placed he is not required for industry and should therefore be made available to the Forces. For the men for whom applications for deferment have been received, the procedure is a little more complicated. If the statement giving the grounds for the man's deferment does not convince the Manpower Board that the man should be left where he is, the Board asks one of its Labour Supply Inspectors to go to the firm to investigate the man's indispensability in his present job. It may also ask the local employment exchange to

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<sup>1</sup> See below. There are about 120 allocation offices set up in large exchanges and covering a given group of employment exchange areas for the purposes of classifying and filing the registration of men under the Armed Forces Acts.

check the accuracy of the statements made on the form. Moreover, it may consult the representative of the supply department concerned with the employer's output, asking whether evidence can be produced to show that the man's release would seriously interfere with production. On the basis of the information assembled in this way, the Board reaches its decision in each case. If it decides that the man should not remain in his present job, his papers are sent to the local exchange, which endeavours to place him in other industrial work. If he cannot be placed within a limited period, then his papers are returned to the Manpower Board for reconsideration; and it is decided whether or not to send him into the Forces.

Generally speaking, this procedure has been working satisfactorily. The Manpower Boards were at first badly handicapped by a great accumulation of cases, on the one hand, and by a lack of precise definition of their functions, on the other. These handicaps are being overcome gradually. The Boards are acquiring detailed information, through their work, in regard to each employer's labour force and his requirements. Their approach to the withdrawal of men is primarily on the basis of each individual establishment. It has to be closely co-ordinated with the more general measures being taken to withdraw labour (both men and women) under the Registration for Employment Order and the concentration of production scheme, because withdrawal is one problem irrespective of age or sex. This co-ordination is facilitated by the fact that the Boards are an integral part of the labour supply machinery of the Ministry of Labour; and second, that they are not placement agencies—all the placement work continues to be done by the exchanges. Thus, the Manpower Boards do not determine the relative priority of different types of work but merely decide whether or not a particular man should remain where he is or be made available for transfer either to other work (in which case he is placed by the exchange) or to the Forces (in which case he is dealt with by the recruitment officers of the Ministry of Labour).

Pressure by the Armed Forces for men continues to be great. As a result, the list of vital war occupations is being revised with a view to reducing it considerably so that fewer men in these occupations will be retained in industry; and, secondly, the ring fence around the labour force of the munitions industries will be made less rigid. At the end of June 1942, the Minister of Labour warned that all industry would "have to face a big call-up later on and in the not so far distant future", and added:

We have combed practically all the trades in the country, apart from the actual munition trades, almost to the bare bones, and the next big call-up will have to come from the young men in the munition industries . . . If manage-

ments and others concerned wait until we have got to take action production may be impeded, but if steps are taken now by every known device to economise in manpower and quickly upgrade older men then this position will be avoided. . . I am not suggesting that there will be one sudden swoop on these industries to take thousands of men in one day, but this additional call-up must begin very soon.<sup>1</sup>

### (b) *Transfer of Men with Special Skill*

The acute shortage of men with special skills urgently needed for war production led to *ad hoc* registrations of men previously engaged in occupations requiring those skills; and on the basis of these registrations the men have been drawn back into their old work through the labour supply machinery of the Ministry of Labour.

The usual procedure is that a worker who appears from his registration card to be available for transfer to more important work is called to an employment exchange for interview. On the basis of the interview, he may agree or be requested to transfer to work in his own occupation or in an allied skilled occupation. In all cases, the interviewing officer weighs the value of what he is actually doing against his value to the war effort in other essential work. If he agrees to transfer, he is given a week or so to make his arrangements for leaving and to wind up his affairs, and then sent to the new job. If the man refuses to transfer he has the right of appeal to a local tripartite board. If his appeal is not upheld and if he still refuses to transfer, he may be prosecuted under Defence Regulation 58A and subjected (on conviction) to a fine or imprisonment or both as in the case of all workers who refuse to comply with directions issued by National Service Officers of the Ministry of Labour.

Efforts to bring registered skilled workers back to their previous occupations by this procedure have been fraught with difficulties. Large numbers of these men—former shipyard workers and coal-miners—had found, often after long unemployment and under-employment, other work which suited them and in which they had acquired skill, a regular income and a feeling of security. Moreover, some of them had found work of importance to the war effort. To be asked to leave their work and return to their former employments was to be asked to give up everything they had gained in long years of effort. The Government could hardly demand this sacrifice without doing its utmost to improve the conditions of work and welfare arrangements in the industries to which they were being pressed to return and without guaranteeing to the men continuity of employment and a minimum income. In principle,

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in the *Manchester Guardian*, 29 June 1942.

this was done through the extension of Essential Work Orders to the industries to which men were being returned. In practice, however, the lack of adequate action along these lines has been the greatest single deterrent to the quick transfer of skilled workers back to their former occupations.

Experience of the return of ex-miners to the pits is probably the best (even if not wholly typical) example of the difficulties encountered in drawing men back to critical occupations for the duration of the war. When war broke out, the coalmining industry employed about 765,000 wage earners, and some 53,000 additional coalminers were registered as wholly unemployed. This labour force was scattered in 1,900 coal mines operated by over 1,100 colliery companies. The loss of export markets resulting from the collapse of France brought extensive unemployment in the mines; and thousands of miners were transferred to other work of national importance or de-reserved and sent into the Forces. By the spring of 1941, the needs for coal production were tremendous and the labour force of the industry was badly depleted. In June 1941, the Minister of Labour made an appeal for the voluntary return to the mines of ex-miners employed in other occupations. The response was limited. Not only was coalmining disagreeable work but earnings were below those of most other war industries and some non-war industries. In July, therefore, there was a compulsory registration of all men between 20 and 60 years of age who had been employed in coalmining for six months or more since the beginning of 1935. The total number of former miners registered was over 105,000; and of this number less than 26,000 stated that they were willing to return to coalmining. It was estimated that at least 50,000 men would be needed. Despite the growing seriousness of the coal situation, only a few former miners were actually returned to the mines during the following months. One of the difficulties was the slow progress of the re-employment of wholly unemployed mineworkers; and colliery owners were warned that failure to allot unemployed workers fit for further work to the mines in the district might "have serious effects in securing the return of mineworkers from other industries to which they have migrated". A second difficulty was imperfect co-ordination of the transfer of an ex-miner back to the industry with his acceptance for work by an employer. The Minister of Labour claimed in August 1941 that he had found over 35,000 men ready to go back to the mines but that the mining employers had been slow in getting them to work.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "It is the imperative duty of the managements when men are offered to take them quickly and get them into work", he said. "These men are making great sacrifices to return to the coal industry and there should be an immediate speeding up." Speech of Minister of Labour and National Service at Norwich, 24 August 1941.

Nevertheless, progress continued to be disappointingly slow. The Ministry of Labour then decided that directions to return to coalmining would be given to all eligible men regardless of whether they had stated on registration that they were willing to go back to mining. The men were to be sent by the Ministry, in consultation with the District Coal Production Committees, to coalmines up to the numbers in each occupational category which had been requested by the management in reply to a query as to the number and types of workers who could be absorbed without delay in the interests of increased production. The Ministry of Labour agreed to accept responsibility for the medical examination of men unwilling to return to mining for health reasons. Finally, colliery owners were warned that action would be taken under the Defence Regulations (by the Board of Trade) to deal with any obstruction on their part to the application of these measures.<sup>1</sup> Despite these steps, the number of men who had returned to the mines from other employment by the end of 1941 was small in relation to the need—only about 36,000; and this figure is not, of course, a net increase. By March 1942, it was estimated that the net increase in manpower for the mining industry during the preceding 12 months, despite all the efforts of the Government, had only been 17,000.

In recent months, renewed pressure has been placed on former miners to go back to the pits. The use of prosecution for failure to obey written direction to return has been increased; and the number of convictions, followed by imprisonments and fines, of ex-miners has risen considerably. The fact that a number of these workers have preferred to go to jail rather than return to the mines testifies to the slowness of progress towards improving wages, conditions of work and welfare arrangements for miners. Moreover, many of the mineworkers believe that production could be greatly increased and that many workers would return far more willingly to the mines if the control of the industry were transferred to a unified national authority and shared with the workers rather than retained in the hands of private owners. The colliery owners, for their part, have insisted that the necessary output can be obtained provided that the Government brings back the men and does not remove the traditional controls over discipline from the management. The Government's plan for reorganising the industry, announced and accepted in June 1942, may help to solve some of these difficulties. In any case, former miners are still being forced back to the industry and dissatisfaction with this and with conditions in the mines has mounted steadily. There is no doubt that ex-miners have been more harshly treated in the process

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<sup>1</sup> *Iron and Coal Trades Review*, 9 January 1942, p. 6.

of labour transference than any other single group in the population. Equally, there is no doubt that, if the mining industry is to be efficiently run during the war, with production concentrated in the pits which can operate most economically, private vested interests will have to be over-ridden. The mineworkers feel that if this is done ruthlessly, the labour supply made available to the industry, at great sacrifice to the men concerned, can be used most effectively and in the national interest.

*(c) Transfer under the Registration for Employment Order*

Men aged 41 to 46, and younger men placed in medical grades III and IV by the army medical examination boards, have been dealt with under the Registration for Employment Order. The normal procedure is that if men in these categories are not clearly engaged on work of national importance, they are called to the employment exchange for interview. If it is agreed, after interview, that a man could be more usefully employed elsewhere, his name is placed on the National Work Register of the exchange and arrangements made by the exchange to transfer him. If the man does not agree voluntarily to change his employment, he may be directed to do so by a National Service Officer. He may appeal against this direction to a tripartite local appeal board. If the decision is against the worker, he has no further right of appeal; and if he still refuses to transfer, he may be prosecuted and subjected, on conviction, to a fine or imprisonment or both.

The total number of men aged 41 to 46 registered by age classes under the Registration for Employment Order was 1,267,813. Of this total nearly 345,000 had been interviewed by March 1942 and only about 20,000 had been found available for transfer or transferred to other work. Most of the men who were registered were already engaged on work of national importance, and, as a result relatively few of them were moved from one job to another.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, while the old Schedule of Reserved Occupations was in oper-

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<sup>1</sup> It was reported in October 1941 that in the north west region only about 7,000 men out of 150,000 who were registered had been found available for transfer. Most of those available for transfer were willing to transfer: "90 per cent. were ready to accept other employment, and some of the 10 per cent. who demurred expressed willingness after a little persuasion". As an officer of the Ministry of Labour expressed it: "The great majority go willingly and with a good heart, and most of the remainder go willingly, if regretfully." It was suggested that the unwillingness of employers to release men was much stronger than the disinclination of the men to go to war work. "The officers of the Ministry declare that this attitude of many employers is 'the greatest deterrent of quick transfer' of men from work of less importance to work of primary necessity. 'We can understand the employers and sympathise with them', said one officer, 'but few of us can escape unwelcome compulsions in war-time, and we should like employers to take a larger view'." (*Manchester Guardian*, 1 October 1941.)



ation, it was impracticable to comb out and transfer men over military age while leaving younger men of military age engaged in the same type of less essential work.

Now that the age classes up to 40 have been sifted through as a result of the abolition of block reservation from military service, the older age classes will be re-examined more critically. In particular, men on work which can be done by women must be moved to other work which cannot be done by women; and men in good physical condition may be required to transfer to heavy labouring work. The upper age limit for military service has been raised from 41 to 51, but men over 40 are not being called for military service (with the exception of doctors and dentists) but are regarded as available for transfer to vital war work. They will continue to be dealt with by the exchanges under the Registration for Employment Order. Since the transfer of these men is almost always a question of withdrawal from their present employment, the process has to be closely co-ordinated with the withdrawal of the men being de-reserved by the District Manpower Boards. The Boards, with their knowledge of the requirements of each employer, can advise the employment exchanges on the transfer of older men in particular firms. It is the responsibility of the employment exchanges, however, to make the final decision in each case and to make the arrangements for directing the men to other work.

#### (d) *Redistribution of Skilled Men in Munitions Industries*

In addition to bringing skilled labour back into war work, there have been continuous efforts ever since June 1940 to redistribute the skilled labour supply of the munitions industries. These efforts have been directed largely towards decreasing the ratio of skilled to semi-skilled and unskilled labour and distributing the limited supply of skilled labour as equitably as possible among the war industries. When the skilled men available for transfer from other less essential industries were absorbed into the munitions industries, two main sources of skilled labour remained: first, men who became available through turnover, and second, those who were discovered by the routine inspection of the labour supply of munitions industries. These sources have been tapped to fill the preference vacancies in the munitions firms.

Despite the employment controls of the Essential Work Orders, turnover among skilled men has remained at a surprisingly high level. A large number of men are discharged or leave their employment (with the permission of a National Service Officer) for a variety of reasons—changes in the production programme rendering them surplus, quarrels with their foremen, bombing damage, medical

reasons, etc. In addition, there are still some important firms engaged on war work which are not scheduled under the Essential Work Orders (partly because of employers' resistance to scheduling); and skilled men from these firms can still leave their work at will. Finally, a smaller number of skilled men are found, and their release secured, by the Inspectors of Labour Supply. Men in all these categories can find other employment only through the employment exchanges and can therefore be directed into the jobs where they are most needed. In this way a limited amount of transference of skilled labour takes place within the munitions industries. At the present stage of the war programme, turnover will probably tend to decrease slightly and the continuing need for the redistribution of skilled men will have to be met largely through the work of the Inspectors of Labour Supply.

Methods for redistributing skilled men within munitions industries have so far not been wholly successful. The main reasons for the failure to transfer skilled men to the extent required to meet the changing needs of the war production programme are said to be: (1) resistance by employers and their managerial staff; (2) resistance by the workers affected; (3) resistance by the representatives of the production departments; (4) the relatively weak position of the Inspectors of Labour Supply; and (5) the scarcity of women.

A number of employers still prefer to think in terms of the individual plant rather than of the industry of which the plant is but one small part. These employers regard their skilled workers as a personal possession rather than as a national resource. They are unwilling to look around to see how many can be spared without serious disruption of their own operations and they resent and sometimes actively oppose any inroad of the Inspectors of Labour Supply on their skilled labour, even where it is wholly justifiable. The Inspectors have at times been intimidated by the executives of large firms and have not always been able to press their recommendations; and the Regional Controllers of the Ministry have not always been forceful enough in backing them up. In several cases, older firms in the engineering industry, for example, have failed to release skilled workers who might have helped to start or to step up productive operations in newer engineering firms. This attitude, although not widespread, is nevertheless serious. It has been one of the factors preventing a comprehensive pooling of skilled labour for war production. It has also been a cause of irritation among those skilled workers who have not been continuously employed at their full level of skill. The difficulty has been overcome in some instances by the use of the compulsory powers of the officers of the Ministry of Labour to secure the release and transfer

of workers. In other instances, however, these officers have been inclined to apply too little compulsion to recalcitrant managements. If the position of the Inspectors of Labour Supply themselves were strengthened in relation to management, it would undoubtedly greatly increase their ability to draw out skilled men from non-co-operative firms. It has been widely recognised that the Inspectors, in order to do their work well, must be able to meet with company executives on equal terms.

In many cases, proposals for transfer meet with the opposition of the men concerned. Resistance among skilled workers is often due to the fact that transfer means lower wages or inferior conditions of employment or that it involves leaving home, or to various other reasons. The men can, of course, be compelled to change their employment; and this is done in some instances. In order to reduce the need for compulsion, however, and to lessen appeals against directions, it has been agreed by the central Engineering Industry Advisory Panel (made up of representatives of employers and workers) that wherever possible men to be transferred should be volunteers or men selected jointly by representatives of the management and of the workers. Thus, the Inspector of Labour Supply merely specifies that the firm shall release one or two men of a certain trade; and the choice of the men is left to the shop committee. The elimination of wage and bonus differentials and the levelling up of welfare and working conditions would probably help more than anything else to overcome resistance to transfer, but action in these directions has so far been somewhat slow.

An employer who resists proposals for the transfer of one of his skilled workers generally enlists the support of the regional representative of the supply department concerned with his production; and a worker who does not wish to go to other work is apt to call for the support of his union representative. In most cases this is a reasonable procedure and, by lifting the question outside the particular plant, often leads to practical conclusions after discussion with the officers of the Ministry of Labour. In some cases, however, neither the representatives of the Supply Departments nor the unions are in a position accurately to judge the priority which should be given to the different types of work. Looked at singly, the employer or the worker concerned might have a good case for non-transfer; but looked at more comprehensively, the transfer might well be in the national interest. The participation of the unions in the Regional Production Boards and their association with the work of the Ministry of Labour has helped to solve part of the problem. So far as the supply department representatives are concerned, Labour Supply Sub-committees of the Regional

Boards have been set up in several regions to discuss, among other things, proposals for transfer. Made up of the Regional Controller of the Ministry of Labour (or his deputy) and one representative of each supply department, the sub-committees thrash out the particulars of the cases and generally reach a decision—most often in the form of a compromise.<sup>1</sup> If they cannot agree, then the points of disagreement are referred up to the headquarters level for final decision. Given the growing difficulty of filling high preference vacancies, the Ministry of Labour is tending to decrease its willingness to compromise and to insist on the release of the full quota of men judged possible by its technical inspectors.

The work of the Inspectors of Labour Supply is of the greatest importance in the distribution of skill and it is carried out under difficult conditions, particularly when both the employer and the worker oppose the release. Their work is highly technical in character; and, while many of the inspectors are well qualified and capable engineers, a number of others have been criticised for their failure to possess the technical qualifications necessary for judging whether or not skilled men could be taken away from particular job operations and made available for transfer elsewhere. This is partly because the Labour Supply Inspectorate was built up hurriedly during the summer of 1940 at a time when most first-class engineers were in employment, partly because the salaries offered to inspectors have not been adequate to draw the best-qualified men into Government service, and partly because, since the Inspectorate was new, the standards for recruitment had not been defined. On the other hand, the inspectors have sometimes been the object of unfair criticism by managements which stand to lose rather than to gain by their activities. Now that the inspectors have gained experience, they are able to deal more forcefully with the problems raised in their inspection work. Moreover, efforts are being made to help them in their work, both through the regional and district offices and from the Ministry's headquarters. For example, a headquarters Dilution Committee has been working out data to show the minimum percentage of skilled men required to perform certain production operations; and this will be a useful guide to the inspectors in their work.

The scarcity of women for up-grading and substitution has frequently impeded the transfer of skilled men. This obstacle to the redistribution of skill is being dealt with by the general programme for the mobilisation and placement of women. The general labour

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<sup>1</sup> For example, if the Inspectors of the Ministry of Labour had found 6 men for release in one plant, the sub-committee might agree that 3 or 4 should be released and the rest retained.

shortage makes it difficult to envisage a complete solution but in particular cases the bottleneck can generally be overcome.

### THE MOBILISATION AND TRANSFER OF WOMEN WORKERS

While the male labour supply was being heavily drawn upon to meet the needs of the Armed Forces and efforts were being made to redistribute the men left for industry to best advantage, women were being mobilised for war work under the Registration for Employment Order. Their mobilisation has had to be synchronised with the effective demand of munitions factories for labour, with the absorption of men by the Forces, and with the transfer of labour from less essential industries affected by the concentration of production scheme. The special procedures developed for selecting and transferring women to war work have evolved gradually and have been modified considerably in the light of experience and in response to the steadily increasing stringency of the employment market. They have been based on the voluntary principle, but the power of compulsory direction has been used where other methods have failed to produce enough women workers to meet the expanding needs of war industries.

#### (a) *Description of the General Procedure*

The first step in the procedure is that a woman is called, soon after the registration of her age group, to an employment exchange for a selection interview. In principle, every registered woman is liable to be called for interview; but in practice, women are not at present called for interview if they are in employment from which women are not being called under the system of deferment from national service<sup>1</sup>; if they belong to certain categories of women in industries covered by special arrangements for the withdrawal of women; if they have children of their own under 14 years of age living with them; or if they are clearly unsuitable for transfer for health or domestic reasons. The wives of men in the Armed Forces have not yet been called upon to leave their homes to take up war work, but they may be called for interview and directed into local war work or into other employment to substitute for women who

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<sup>1</sup> This list of employments from which women are not being called up is as follows: agriculture and forestry, canteen and hostel staff, civil defence forces and services, coal production, cotton spinning and doubling and cotton and rayon weaving in Lancashire and Cheshire, employment in Government departments or by local authorities, hospital work and nursing, laundries, specified munitions work, navy, army and air force institutes, public utility services, certain religious work, teaching, timber production, transport, veterinary practice, and the women's auxiliary police corps. The list is subject to variation.

could take up war work. In general, women not in full-time and paid employment and not responsible for a household are called for interview first (even if there are women in other classes in earlier age groups who have still to be interviewed), and then women in full-time and paid employment are called.<sup>1</sup>

The primary purpose of the selection interview is to reach agreement between the potential war worker and the employment exchange officer as to whether the former should be required to transfer to work of greater importance and, if so, where she should be placed. Before the interview, the woman is told of the types of war work available and her obligation to perform such work. Her employer is informed that she is being called for interview and asked whether he wishes to put forward any reasons why she should not be considered available for transfer to more important work. During the interview, she is given additional details of the opportunities for war employment and the interviewing officer (always a woman<sup>2</sup>) ascertains whether she can take up such work at once, no matter where the job may be. Freedom of choice in regard to the type or the location of the work has been granted only to the extent to which it has proved to be "compatible with the national interest"; and the range of choice has been continuously shrinking.

On the basis of the interview, the woman is classified as either "mobile" or "immobile", according to whether the interviewing officer decides that she can transfer to another place of work or not. If she is classified as "mobile", her card is placed in a National Work Register, kept in each employment exchange, of women who are ready and able to transfer to war work, in another district if necessary. A woman is assumed to be "mobile" unless (a) she can prove that personal reasons involving real hardship make her transfer impossible, or that she possesses special qualifications better used in her present work than they could possibly be elsewhere, or (b) her employer can prove that she is a pivotal worker who is absolutely indispensable to his operations.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the onus of proving immobility rests with the woman or her employer rather than with the employment exchange.

If she agrees to go to war work voluntarily, she is given particulars of the job and arrangements for her journey are completed.

<sup>1</sup> Some difficulties arose because a number of women refused to attend for interview. They could not be directed to do so under Regulation 58A; so a special Regulation (Regulation 80B) was made according to which the Minister of Labour may direct any person to attend for interview and be interviewed and, if required to do so, to attend for and submit to medical examination. Failure to comply means that prosecution proceedings may be begun.

<sup>2</sup> The interviewers must always be officials of supervisory grade.

<sup>3</sup> Even if this is proved to be the case, the woman may remain only temporarily, as a rule, and the employer must make every effort to replace her.

As a rule, mobile women from one particular area are sent to the same demand area when asked to transfer. On the basis of the colouring of areas according to the stringency of women war workers already described<sup>1</sup>, women are shifted from the supply to the demand areas. Within this frame, the women are placed first in bottleneck vacancies, then in preference vacancies, and lastly in non-preference vacancies, in a strictly limited list of work classified as "vital war work".

"Subject to the proper utilisation in the national interest of special qualifications", they are placed only in these types of industrial work: munitions, engineering training, transport services (including maintenance), post office engineering, or employment as hospital domestics. If vacancies exist in a few other types of work, however, they may likewise be treated as vital war work to which women may be referred.<sup>2</sup> Local war jobs must be filled, wherever possible, by women who cannot take up work in another area. Immobile women are placed in these jobs or they are used to substitute for women in other employment who are in a position to transfer to war work elsewhere.

If the woman does not agree to transfer voluntarily in accordance with the decision of the employment exchange, the reasonableness or unreasonableness of her objection is first probed by a women's sub-committee of the Local Employment Committee of the employment exchange. If she continues to refuse to transfer, she may be "directed", *i.e.* ordered, to transfer by a National Service Officer. If she objects to the direction to transfer, she may appeal (on a form obtained at the employment exchange) to a tripartite local appeal board; and pending a recommendation by this board, she may not be transferred. If the board recommends in her favour, the National Service Officer will almost invariably accept this as a decision, although he retains the final word in all cases. If the board recommends against her, there is no further right of appeal. If she continues to be unwilling to transfer, she may be prosecuted under Regulation 58A and subjected, on conviction, to a fine or imprisonment or both.

### *(b) Development and Application of the Procedure*

The selection interviews began in May 1941. During the first months, the mobilisation and transfer of women under the scheme

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 28-29.

<sup>2</sup> Naval Armament, Store and Victualling Depots; War Office Control Ordnance Depots; Air Ministry Maintenance Units; timber production; care of children in nurseries and other institutions; canteens and hostels; and temporary Government service.

moved slowly. The most urgent task at that time was to absorb the men and women thrown out of work by the measures curtailing non-essential activity; and all workers who were in employment were strongly urged not to leave their jobs until they had been asked to do so by an employment exchange official.<sup>1</sup> It was proving extremely difficult to organise the re-employment of women (particularly older women) who had become unemployed as a result of concentration in the non-essential trades; and this tended to slow up the selection and transference of other classes of workers. Moreover, the Government was deliberately following a policy of caution in mobilising the country's woman power, because, as the Minister of Labour said, "at no point could you turn the people against the war effort more easily".<sup>2</sup>

A considerable amount of misunderstanding arose at first in transferring women to war work through the selection interview procedure. The Minister of Labour, with the advice of a Women's Consultative Committee (which meets regularly once a fortnight), urged the employment exchanges to deal with the young women in a tactful and human way. Nevertheless, protests were often made against the methods of interviewing used by local officials. In some cases, the officials were criticised for not giving enough "directions" to the registrants; in others, they were criticised for being too prone to use pressure and for "bullying" the women.<sup>3</sup> A great deal of the initial difficulty arose because the registrants' and employers' responsibilities and rights under the Order were not clear. Trade unions with members affected by the selection procedure often were asked, for example, to give specific instructions to local officers and

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<sup>1</sup> The number of women registered as wholly unemployed reached the total of 122,000 (of whom only 4,000 were written off as unsuitable for ordinary industrial employment) by June 1941. One of the trade union journals wrote as follows in May 1941:

Many of our women members who have been in the first two registration groups seem to have some fear as to what may happen. While it is impossible to foretell the future, I hope that those affected will stick to their present jobs unless they feel the call to join one of the services open to women. The giving up of present employment to seek some other form of industrial war work may result in their not being able to be fitted in and cause complications for obtaining Unemployment Insurance Benefit. Stop where you are and carry on and if the call comes in the national interest for you to transfer to other work you will be able to put your case before the authorities who will also be responsible for any delay in getting you to work. (*The Tailor and Garment Worker*, May 1941, p. 13.)

<sup>2</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 9 December 1941, col. 1437.

<sup>3</sup> Women trade unionists pointed out, in the Edinburgh Trades Union Congress (1941), that the employment exchanges were overcrowded and that no private rooms were available for the selection interviews. Although this was unimportant in some cases, in others "the girl may have private and domestic details which she has to tell the interviewer and which she does not want other people to hear". *Report of the Proceedings, op. cit.*, pp. 218-19.



members, explaining whether a woman worker had any protection rights if she refused to sign any forms or to offer herself for other work when asked to do so. In addition, employers objected strongly to the procedure then in force of consulting them only after their workers had been called for a selection interview. Moreover, they were often reluctant to co-operate with the employment exchanges when this threatened the loss of trained women and a partial disruption of their activity. Parents sometimes discouraged the woman from moving away from home.<sup>1</sup> As a result, complaints began to accumulate from all sides. At the same time, criticism began to be made that the tempo at which results were being achieved did not correspond to the increasingly urgent need for labour in the war factories.<sup>2</sup> It was widely urged that more exacting tests should be applied to the character of the work on which employed workers were engaged, that more direct compulsion should be used to force the transference of workers from non-essential to essential work, and that more vigorous efforts should be made to substitute older and less mobile workers for mobile women, thereby releasing the latter for employment in other districts. Trade union leaders reported that many of the women registrants were complaining that red tape and "foolish scruples" were delaying their transfer to war work, even though they were ready and anxious to take up war jobs, and that, as a result, much of the initial enthusiasm with which women had approached their new industrial responsibilities was being allowed to evaporate.

Largely in order to speed up the absorption of women into war work and to allay the spate of criticism and complaints, changes were made in the basis of selection of women for transfer late in August 1941. It then began to be assumed that a woman was mobile

<sup>1</sup> "I beg parents to realise how important it is that no girl who is needed to go to a job away from her home should be faced with the dreadful conflict of conscience which arises when the State tells her that she is wanted and the parent is discouraging." (Statement of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour, quoted in the *Daily Herald*, 19 August 1941.)

<sup>2</sup> By 12 July 1941, 1,517,000 women had been registered, 267,000 women had been interviewed and over 67,000 had been placed on the National Work Register or transferred at once to other work of more importance. These figures indicate that from one-quarter to one-third of those interviewed had been found to be available for transfer to war work. The proportion available for transfer naturally varied considerably according to the category being interviewed: a higher proportion were available for transfer in less essential industries being or about to be curtailed than among women with no occupation but with household duties. The results were characterised as somewhat disappointing, since the chief need was to secure workers who were free to go wherever their services might be required and these were the age classes considered to be the most mobile. (*Ministry of Labour Gazette*, August 1941, p. 156.)

unless she or her employer could prove the contrary. The procedure was also changed to provide that the employer should be consulted before the woman was called for interview; and it was arranged that interviews should be conducted at the exchange nearest the employer's workshop or in the factory itself, instead of at the exchange nearest the woman's home, thereby facilitating consideration of the whole female labour force of each undertaking in relation to its requirements. In addition, the woman's rights and duties were explained to her more clearly before her selection interview; and she could, if she so wished, be accompanied by a trade union representative or other friend when called for interview. The employment exchanges themselves began to have a clearer idea of the possibilities of the selection and transference scheme. While at first they had tended to take the line of least resistance when any difficulties arose, they gradually began to adopt a stronger attitude in dealing with the objections of the employers and workers affected. At the same time, the Ministry of Labour began to call conferences with employers in industries employing large numbers of women, with a view to pressing them to agree to and to work out plans for the release of a certain percentage of their women workers. Finally, the list of vital war work into which women were to be transferred was narrowed down until it included only aircraft manufacture, electric cable making, engineering in armaments and munitions plants (including training), radio manufacture, royal ordnance factories, tanks and tank part manufacture, and transport and maintenance service. This reduction in the industrial work classified as "vital" made it easier for the employment exchanges to decide in individual cases whether or not a woman should be asked to transfer.

In October 1941, the Minister of Labour told the House of Commons that women had been moving into war industry "almost up to the amount required", and that over 40,000 women per week were being interviewed. He explained that a gradual start had been necessary, saying: "If I introduced mobilisation of women and made them go to the Employment Exchanges, where they were given cards and treated in a hard official style, the scheme would be a complete breakdown. One thing I am very glad about, and that is . . . that I have carried the confidence of the parents of this country. I think that is very vital. If you have to build up an enormous amount of welfare work, hostels, and so on—and that is very important when you are taking women of 19, 20 and onwards away from their homes and assuming liability for them possibly in

uncongenial billets in large towns—you must proceed with tact. I think that in that we have succeeded.”<sup>1</sup>

By December 1941, over 3,000,000 women had been registered for war work and over 900,000 had been interviewed for such employment by the employment exchanges. The Minister of Labour stated that “over 1,000,000” women had been transferred to munitions production and vital war services and industries during the war, a movement which he characterised as “an amazing compression of effort into a short period of the transference from peace to war endeavour in human personnel”.<sup>2</sup> The rate of interviewing was approaching the goal of 50,000 per week, and over 12,000 women from the registered age classes were being transferred each week to the services or to war industry. Over the whole field of woman power, the employment exchanges were filling vacancies in the principal munitions industries for nearly 20,000 women per week.

### (c) *Strengthening of Policy and Procedure during 1942*

These results are impressive, but the manpower requirements forecast for 1942 were tremendous and the need for women workers was growing steadily. It was therefore decided to tighten up, in the light of experience acquired during the year, the policy and procedure for mobilising women and for directing them only to the most vital forms of war work. In the first place, the registered age classes (of women aged 20 to 30) were reviewed by blocks, with a view to the compulsory withdrawal of the largest possible number of potential war workers. Secondly, liability to national service was extended to women (with certain exceptions) and first applied to the younger age classes, thereby making it possible to re-examine these registrants once again and to deal with them more severely as “conscripts”. Thirdly, in order to direct the women being mobilised into the most useful war employments, a restriction on the engagement of all women of certain ages was introduced. Finally, these measures for strengthening the procedures for mobilising women were accompanied by an increase in the use of written directions and direct pressure of various kinds.

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 8 October 1941, col. 1078. On 9 December he again justified a policy of cautious mobilisation of women, stating: “I think it was right to talk with these young girls privately and then to give them a day or two in which to think it over. Let them go home and speak to their parents and let them say: ‘What had I better do’, and then come back in a day or two, and, if they cannot make up their minds, then it will be for us to help them to do so. It is a far better British way than trying to impose upon them harsh methods.”

<sup>2</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 9 December 1941, col. 1437.

The first step was a review of the age classes which had already been registered. It was recognised that the preliminary sifting and transference of registrants had been done in a piecemeal fashion, with the object of disturbing as few women already in employment as possible, and that, as a result, many women had been placed without adequate reason in the "interview deferred" register or interviewed but not asked to transfer. Thus, women between 20 and 30 years of age inclusive were declared to be potential war workers, except those who could clearly prove that they occupied pivotal positions or possessed special qualifications best used in their present work. Then, the Ministry of Labour and National Service began to increase its pressure for the release of women in the younger age classes within this age group and to sift through the registrants once more, concentrating first on the 20-21 year olds, next the 22-23 year olds, then those up to 25 and down to 19 years of age, and finally those between 26 and 30 years of age. It was emphasised that these age classes contained the highest proportion of the mobile workers most in demand and that a far more intensive examination of each case had to be made with a view to transferring to war work the maximum number of these young women. Employers were therefore warned that they must be prepared to lose all their women workers between the ages of 20 and 30. The employment exchanges were told that they must appreciate to the full the urgent necessity of finding additional mobile workers and that they should be prepared to be less hesitant in the issuance of formal directions by way of compulsion.

This was the general policy. In practice, special arrangements were made in a wide variety of industries to carry out the compulsory withdrawal of young women workers. These arrangements have been designed to constitute a form of evolutionary pressure on employers—to accustom them gradually to the release of more and more of their younger workers and to force them to take an initiative in drawing in older and married workers for full or part-time employment. The arrangements have been based on as consistent a formula as possible. The general principle was to withdraw first all women between 20 and 25 years of age (except those with special qualifications or in pivotal positions) even though the exchange could not provide substitutes for the employers, and later to withdraw women between 26 and 30 years of age usually (but not always) on condition that substitutes could be provided.<sup>1</sup> The industries covered by these special

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<sup>1</sup> The gradual withdrawal of women aged 26 to 30 was partly to release additional workers but partly also to force the employment exchanges to find substitutes, particularly married women who would be willing to work at least part-time in industry.

schemes have been changing continuously. The first affected were the retail trades (other than food and coal), the heavy and light clothing industries, and the woollen and worsted industry. As time has passed, a great many other industries (including the food trades) and occupations have been brought within the frame of special procedure for the compulsory withdrawal of young women.<sup>1</sup> In most industries the employment exchanges arranged the withdrawal of these women workers after negotiations with the employers, while in others (such as the retail trades, other than food and coal, and clothing) committees of employers and workers were set up to examine employers' applications for the retention of pivotal workers or workers with special qualifications.<sup>2</sup>

For each industry, the general formula for withdrawal may be varied to meet the special needs of the industry or a special situation. For example, if a particular industry can prove statistically that the age distribution of its labour force is such that the policy of withdrawing all women between 20 and 25 years of age would work special hardship, the Ministry of Labour can make allowances and instruct the employment exchanges to be more lenient in making inroads into the labour supply of the industry. This can be done by making greater use of the general permission to leave pivotal workers and those with special qualifications in their employment; or the employment exchange can (at its discretion) spread the withdrawal of labour over a longer period. No effort has been made, however, to differentiate within any one industry in the treatment of firms whose labour forces have a very different age distribution.

As more and more labour has been withdrawn, there has been a tendency towards a more individualistic treatment of the industries covered by special arrangements for withdrawing young women workers. In the retail food trades, for example, a distinction has been made between the different areas of the country: in difficult labour supply areas where increasing numbers of war workers will have to be sent and where, therefore, the food industry cannot be contracted easily, more lenient rules for the withdrawal

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<sup>1</sup> For example, special arrangements were made in these industries and professions: accountancy, employment with the B.B.C. and by Government departments and local authorities, bookbinding, canteens and restaurants, building societies, cinemas, chartered shipbrokers, coal distribution, electricity undertakings, film production, hotels and boarding houses, water undertakings, printing and publishing, restaurants, wholesale distribution of tobacco and of textiles, voluntary hospitals. This list is not comprehensive.

<sup>2</sup> The exchanges accept the advice of these committees unless they disagree strongly enough to refer the case to headquarters.

of women from the food trades are in force than in "easy" labour supply areas.<sup>1</sup> In other industries, the Ministry of Labour has agreed to consult the Government departments concerned in order to prevent an overly zealous withdrawal of certain types of workers. For example, in withdrawing women from health insurance committees, the Ministry of Labour consults the district officers of the Ministry of Health; and in withdrawing women clerks from munitions factories, the Ministry consults the supply department affected in order to make sure that their release does not obstruct such activity as the preparation of the payroll, thereby interfering with production.

Meanwhile, the younger age classes were combed through once again as a result of the application of the National Service Act (No. 2), 1941, adopted in December, which extended liability to some form of service or war work to all women (except married women). A proclamation was issued at the same time applying the provisions of the Act to all single women, widows and divorced and separated women between the ages of 20 and 30 inclusive, with specified exceptions. The first groups called up for service were women aged 20 and 21 and the next those aged 22 and 23. The registrations already made under the Registration for Employment Order are being used for calling women up under the National Service Act, both in order to prevent duplication and because the scope of the industrial registrations is somewhat broader.

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<sup>1</sup> In the food trades, the following procedure (adopted after a conference of employers and workers in those trades with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Food) applies in the difficult labour supply areas:

(1) No action will be taken at present (May 1942) in the case of women engaged in the retail food trades who at their date of registration were: (a) in the 26-30 registered age groups (other than clerical workers), (b) over 30.

(2) All single women (including clerical workers) in the 20-21 age groups will be withdrawn under the National Service Acts.

(3) All married women (including clerical workers) in the 20-21 age groups will be withdrawn under the Registration for Employment Order.

(4) Women in the 22-25 registered age groups (other than clerical workers) will not be withdrawn unless and until a substitute can be found to take over the work.

(5) All clerical workers (including cashiers) in the 22-30 age groups will be withdrawn under the Registration for Employment Order, except that the following categories will not be withdrawn unless substitutes are found: (a) women with special qualifications as shorthand-typists or comptometer operators; (b) women occupying pivotal positions.

(6) Employers will be responsible for finding substitutes where necessary for the women in the 20-21 age groups. Local offices would, however, give every possible assistance, and employers are urged to get in touch with the local offices in this matter as soon as possible. Substitutes might be recruited from: (a) women over 30; (b) married women of all ages with children under 14 living at home.

(7) Under the National Service Acts employers may apply for deferment for women in the 20-21 age groups in their employment, but such applications should be limited to a minimum. Applications for deferment will be considered by the District Manpower Boards, and no application for deferment will be rejected by the Boards without consultation with the Divisional Food Offices.

Each woman who is liable to national service is sent by the employment exchange a form which she must fill out and return to the exchange, stating particulars of her employment and (1) whether she considers herself liable under the National Service Act; (2) whether she wishes to serve in one of the women's auxiliary services of the Armed Forces, in Civil Defence or in war industry; (3) whether she wishes to apply for postponement of service on grounds of exceptional hardship; or (4) whether she wishes to register as a conscientious objector. Her employer is asked by the exchange to confirm the particulars relating to her employment.

After this registration for national service has been completed, each woman is considered either for transfer to one of a strictly limited list of vital war employments or for one of the women's auxiliary services unless she is employed in a specified industry or occupation from which women are not being called but are regarded as reserved.<sup>1</sup> If no application is received for her deferment, her option for industry or the services becomes operative. If she chooses to serve in industry, she is summoned to an employment exchange for interview in order to determine which type of war work would be most suitable; and after this decision has been made by the exchange, she is given a written direction to take up such work. Her position as a conscript under the National Service Acts differs in several respects from that of a woman mobilised under the Registration for Employment Order. Her range of choice in regard to the type of war work is much narrower (if it exists at all); she receives a written direction automatically in order to make it quite clear that she is conscripted; and she has no right of appeal against this direction to a local appeal board, although she may appeal to a hardship committee.

If an application for a woman's deferment is made (either by the employer or by the woman herself), the decision on the application is made, as in the case of men, by a District Manpower Board. In order that the withdrawal of women under the National Service Acts may be related to withdrawal under the Registration for Employment Order, however, the application for deferment goes first to the local exchange. The exchange notes on the forms details concerning arrangements made for withdrawing women from the industry or occupation concerned; comments on the importance of the employer's work, the specific value of the woman to this work, and the probable effect which the woman's withdrawal would have; and inserts any other relevant information which might be needed for the guidance of the Manpower Boards. The

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<sup>1</sup> This list is given on page 53.

registration and application forms then go, together with these data from the exchange, to the Woman Power Officer of the Board. The latter examines the case, obtains any other information required (either through the exchange or through an Inspector of Labour Supply), and presents it to the Board. The Board must be satisfied, in granting deferment, that the woman is indispensable to the employer and cannot be replaced (either by another woman or by a reorganisation of work or by part-time arrangements). The Board may grant deferment until further notice, or deferment until a suitable substitute is made available, or limited deferment for less than six months, or it may refuse deferment. If the application for deferment is refused, the employer is notified to this effect and the forms are returned by the Board to the local exchange, which then assumes full responsibility for the woman's placement in war work.

Of the women called up in the first age classes under the National Service Acts (the 1920 and 1921 age classes), about one third chose the women's auxiliary services and one third industrial work while the remaining third expressed no preference and were called up either for industry or the Forces, wherever the need for their services appeared to be the greater. Most of those who opted for industry were sent to employment in royal ordnance factories, but some were permitted to go to training for engineering, or to take up agricultural, hospital or other work specially appropriate to their qualifications. The number of applications for deferment was very great, and despite strict instructions to grant deferment to conscripted women only in the most exceptional circumstances, the Manpower Boards have not been as severe in refusing deferments as the situation appears to have required.

The mobilisation of women was thus being pressed forward both under the Registration for Employment Order and by the application of the National Service Acts. Meanwhile, however, the lack of direct control over the placement of the women being drawn into employment was creating difficulties which tended to reduce the total number of women who actually became war workers. It was still possible, for example, for a number of women to find employment through their own efforts, or, if employed, to leave their employment frivolously. It was therefore still possible for a number of women to get into work which was not of the highest importance or to move to non-essential work.<sup>1</sup> In order to check these practices, a Control of Engagement Order was applied in January 1942 (effective in February) to all women

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<sup>1</sup> This problem was accentuated by the slowness of the scheduling of undertakings under the Essential Work Orders.



between the ages of 20 and 30 inclusive; and it was amended in April to cover, in addition, girls of 18 and 19 years of age.<sup>1</sup> No woman between 18 and 30 years of age may now obtain or seek to obtain a job except through an employment exchange, and no employer may engage or seek to engage any such worker except through an exchange. There are specified exceptions, including employment in agriculture, timber production (if the woman belongs to the Women's Land Army), nursing, teaching, as well as doctors, dentists or policewomen, and whole-time employment in any of the Women's Services listed in a schedule attached to the Order. Moreover, women with children under 14 living with them are excluded from the restriction on engagement, not only because they are not ordinarily expected to take up war work but also because they might be induced to volunteer for such work (or to substitute for others who could take up war work) if they were freed from the obligation to find employment through an exchange. Finally, a woman may be given a permit exempting the employment in which she is engaged from the provisions of the Order and thus permitting her to find work either through her own efforts or through an approved agency; this was done largely because the employment exchanges are not yet equipped to deal with women with specialised or extraordinary qualifications.

The Order has apparently put a stop to the practices which had begun to cause trouble (although, of course, it could not correct the damage that had already occurred). In the first place, by forcing women to obtain employment through an exchange, it tends to prevent them from leaving their present jobs (which, even though important, might not yet have been covered by the Essential Work Orders) and taking up less important work. Secondly, it gives the exchanges direct control over the placement of registered women not yet interviewed and directed to war work and thus makes it impossible for them to drift into work which is not of the highest importance. Thirdly, it prevents employers from enticing young women into their employment and from advertising for them. One practice which has not been checked by the Order, however, is the leaving of employment by women who, instead of seeking other employment, go home and stay there.

The enforcement of the Control of Engagement Order has not met as many snags as might have been expected. One major reason for this is the fact that, by the time the Order came into effect,

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<sup>1</sup> The Employment of Women (Control of Engagement) Order, 1942, dated 22 January, S.R. & O. 1942, No. 100, amended by S.R. & O. 1942, No. 797, dated 28 April.

most employers were already well accustomed to restrictions on engagement—and indeed had become rather timid about hiring any workers without first consulting an employment exchange. Compliance can be checked by the transfer of unemployment books, by the notification of change of occupation to the office of registration, and by the examination of employers' books by the Inspectors of Labour Supply or employment exchange officials under the Records and Information Order.<sup>1</sup>

Now that women up to the age of 41 have been registered, and those up to 45 are being registered, the question has arisen whether the Control of Engagement Order should be extended to cover the older women. It is recognised that these women are more difficult to place than the younger ones. More of them have special or unusual qualifications; more of them have been working on their own account; and more of them are less adaptable and must be persuaded, rather than forced, into the limited list of vital war work to which the younger women are being sent. Although the Order, as it stands, already possesses a certain amount of flexibility through the system of permits for women with special qualifications and by approving agencies for placements in special occupations, it may have to be given still more flexibility before it can be a satisfactory method for placing the older women workers. Moreover, the employers are anxious to retain the right to engage directly older and married women. They argue that many of these women would come back to work for a former employer but would resist the idea of entering into a wholly new employment; and that, given this fact, the obligation to find work only through an exchange would discourage large numbers of them from taking up war or other work at a time when their services are most needed. Whether a restriction on engagement should be extended to these older women will probably be decided partly in the light of experience of the operation of the Order among the younger workers and partly also on the results of the selection interviews with the older workers, taken in relation to the existing requirements for woman power.

The mobilisation of women for war work was speeded up considerably during the first six months of 1942 as a result of these steps. The Director General of Manpower announced at the end of June 1942 that 8,000,000 women had been registered; that nearly 2,000,000 of them had been interviewed; that interviewing

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<sup>1</sup> The control of advertisements for women workers has been greatly facilitated by the co-operation of the press. If a newspaper receives a questionable advertisement, for example, it will frequently take the matter up directly with the advertiser.

was continuing at the rate of about 50,000 per week; and that about 20,000 women were being placed in employment (either in industry or in the women's services) each week—about 85,000 each month.<sup>1</sup> He stated that the total increase from June 1939 to June 1942 in the number of women employed in munitions and other vital industries amounted to 1,750,000.

Increasing emphasis is now being placed on the necessity for drawing into the employment market "at least 1,000,000" married women or women doing household work. The Prime Minister stated as early as December 1941 that these women comprised the largest remaining reserve for industry and home defence. Adding that many of them must be brought into industry on a part-time basis, he said:

The part-time employment of women in industry has already been developed, but on nothing like the scale which must be reached in the months which lie before us. This is a matter to which employers would be wise to give their immediate attention. They should consider whether and to what extent they can adapt their businesses, particularly smaller businesses and industries, to a part-time system. An immense variety of arrangements are possible to enable women to divide up domestic tasks and then be free to work close at hand in the factory or the field. The treatment of the problem must be flexible . . . Whenever practicable, work will be brought as near to the homes as possible . . . The whole of this process needs to be developed with the greatest energy and contrivance.<sup>2</sup>

Little pressure was at first used to bring older women workers into war work or into employments in which they could release younger women for war work. Now, if the older women do not agree to do so voluntarily, the exchanges are ready and able to direct them to do so in most instances; and the procedures under the Registration for Employment Order have been modified to meet the placement requirements of older women. For example, in some areas, women with household responsibilities are being interviewed by special Women's Panels, made up of the members of the Women's Sub-Committees of the Local Employment Committees of the exchanges and strengthened by additional members. These panels interview the women and come to some conclusion as to whether they should be required to take up part-time employment, full-time employment or no other employment aside from

<sup>1</sup> Statement by the Director General of Manpower at Oxford, reported in the press on 29 June 1942.

<sup>2</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 2 December 1941, cols. 1047-1048. No figures have been made available as yet to indicate the extent to which efforts to develop part-time work for married women and others with household responsibilities have been successful; but an increasing number of employers have been reporting the satisfactory introduction of part-time arrangements.

household duties. The panels make recommendations rather than decisions, but their recommendations are almost always accepted by the exchanges. Publicity campaigns have been organised in many places to enlist the interest of women occupied in their homes in part-time or full-time factory employment. To encourage employers to take on married women on a part-time basis, the Ministry of Labour has taken action to exempt part-time workers from the Essential Work Orders and to exempt their wages from unemployment insurance deductions.

The greatest present need is for the release and transfer of every available mobile woman worker. The progress of this campaign to draw older and married women into the employment market is the major factor determining the rate at which these mobile women will be provided to meet the vital labour requirements of the basic munitions industries and war services.

#### SPECIAL SCHEMES FOR THE TRANSFER OF WORKERS FROM NON-ESSENTIAL TO ESSENTIAL WORK

While the Registration for Employment Order provided the basic machinery for mobilising labour reserves for war industry, further positive steps were necessary to secure an adequate concentration of resources on war work. The general scheme for recruiting and placing men and women in employment of national importance has therefore been supplemented by additional schemes which are specifically intended to organise the release of factory-trained labour from non-essential work and to transfer as much of this labour as possible to war work. They are designed to meet the situation described by the President of the Board of Trade in March 1942, when he said:

We have now reached a stage in our production at which we can afford to waste nothing. All the ingredients of production are precious. A demand for labour on a very big scale is beginning to be felt. There is a strain on our raw material supplies and on our shipping space, and there is a strain on our capacity to produce munitions of war. In these stringent circumstances, I suggest that it is unthinkable that even one man or woman, skilled or unskilled, should work part-time or that a single ton of raw material should be directed towards unessential manufacture.<sup>1</sup>

##### (a) *The Concentration of Production Scheme*

The most general and far-reaching scheme for the transfer of workers from non-essential to essential work is the concentration of production scheme. The release of workers under the various

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<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 27 March 1941, col. 731.

measures for limiting unessential production during 1940 had been somewhat chaotic, and their absorption into war work had been relatively unorganised.<sup>1</sup> In November 1940, for example, *The Economist* called attention to the lack of orderly redistribution of labour, stating that none of the measures curtailing production ensured that the expected numbers of workers were actually put on the labour market; that few of them ensured that the labour made available was of the type required; and that none of them ensured that the labour set free, even if suitable, was actually reabsorbed.<sup>2</sup> In addition, there was a large amount of under-employment of machinery, of plant space, and of labour during 1940. Production was being curtailed of necessity, but resources were not being concentrated to anywhere near the same degree. The hesitancy of the Government to take positive measures to supplement the measures which reduced the less essential imports from abroad and restricted production for the home market contributed to the maintenance of a high level of unemployment, and led to a leakage of labour from non-essential activity to work of an equally non-essential character or to no work at all.

Gradually, however, with the tremendous demands on manpower, indirect methods of transferring resources to war work gave way to more direct and deliberate methods. At the same time the release of workers from non-essential work began to be more closely co-ordinated with measures for training and retraining, dilution of skill, transfer, and placement. As many munitions factories neared completion towards the end of 1940, additional restrictions on production were imposed, to release a quota of trained labour as well as "raw" labour for the new plants. Since curtailment of production did not of itself ensure a concentration of resources on essential work, a far-reaching scheme of industrial consolidation was announced early in 1941. This plan was designed to attain full employment of manpower, machinery and plant, and to bring as extensive and as rapid transference of resources as possible to vital war work. Concentration of production was, at this stage in the war

<sup>1</sup> The measures curtailing production included the raw materials control and Import Prohibition Orders effective in September 1939; the Limitation of Supplies Order in April 1940; and the Limitation of Supplies (Miscellaneous) Order later in 1940.

<sup>2</sup> *The Economist*, 9 November 1940, p. 571. In reply to this and other such criticisms, the Minister without Portfolio admitted in the House of Commons on 27 December 1940 that there had been a time lag in the absorption of workers into more useful work, but that the Board of Trade and the Ministry of Labour were co-operating actively to ensure that when restrictions on production were put into effect there should be no wastage of labour, time and effort. On 27 March 1941, the President of the Board of Trade said that the Limitation of Supplies Order had, in fact, "released about the right number of men and women at about the right time", and added that 9 out of every 10 workers who had been so displaced had already been absorbed.

economy, a necessary part of the reduction of civil production, on the one hand, and of the expansion of war production, on the other.

The basic principle of the scheme for concentrating production is, as Lord Moyne explained to the House of Lords, to use the less essential industries as a kind of sponge from which men and women workers can be squeezed out as required for war industry and the Services. Briefly, the scheme provided that, in industries subject to curtailment, production was to be concentrated in selected "nucleus" firms which would work at full capacity; and other factories in those industries would close down during the war and their machinery, factory space and labour force would be transferred to munitions production, wherever possible, or their plants used to provide training for war workers or for purposes of storage. The details for concentrating production within any one industry were to be worked out so far as possible on a voluntary basis through intra-industry discussion, but, in the absence of agreement, the Government was prepared to impose the degree of reorganisation which it believed to be required.<sup>1</sup>

In closing particular firms, account had to be taken not only of their relative efficiency but also of their geographical situation in relation to the unsatisfied or anticipated demand for war workers. This has been the very basis of the scheme. In principle, the labour released was to be mobile, adaptable and likely to be readily absorbed in war employment or, if unsuitable for war employment, the workers displaced from closed factories were to be taken on as substitutes for war workers available in the nucleus factories. The timing of the concentration of operations was, so far as possible, to coincide with the effective demand for labour from the munitions factories.<sup>2</sup> The objective was a "general synchronisation" of release with re-employment; it was recognised that many factors would prevent complete synchronisation of timing. The employment exchanges were to keep separate records of workers transferred from "concentrated" factories, largely in order to facilitate their eventual return to their old jobs (if available) after the war.

This general scheme was applied gradually, with a variety of special arrangements to meet the peculiar needs of the individual industries and (during 1941) with a minimum of compulsion. Industries which have so far been affected by the concentration of production scheme number about 50, and are those covered by the

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<sup>1</sup> Limits were set on the date by which voluntary schemes had to be submitted to the Board of Trade; and in the absence of agreement by that date the Board drafts a scheme which becomes compulsory for the industry concerned.

<sup>2</sup> BOARD OF TRADE; *Concentration of Production*, Explanatory Memorandum (Cmd. 6258), London, 1941.

Limitation of Supplies (Miscellaneous) Order<sup>1</sup> or subject to raw materials control.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the scheme has been applied, with some modifications, to food processing industries. The application of the scheme to industries depends largely, according to the President of the Board of Trade, on "whether the industry is one in which there is substantial surplus capacity, and in which concentration would release a substantial amount of labour or factory space useful for war purposes".<sup>3</sup> Most industries judged suitable for concentration either have already been dealt with or are under consideration for concentration; but as the war economy changes, others may be brought within the scheme (such as the jute and rubber goods industries, recently faced with an almost complete loss of raw materials).

By the end of 1941, the scheme, as originally framed, was nearing completion. Concentration schemes had made substantial progress in the hosiery, rayon, carpet, pottery, cotton spinning and weaving, corset, boot and shoe, glove and glazed tile industries. It was reported that the final number of workers released from the "concentrated" industries would amount to about one-fifth of the total labour force of these industries in April 1941 (between 700,000 and 750,000). About 145,000 workers had already been released and some 45,000,000 square feet of factory space had been freed for other uses. The largest contribution had been made by the cotton industry; but other industries which had released at least 1,000,000 square feet of factory space and/or 1,500 workers were the hosiery, boot and shoe, carpet and linoleum, rayon, tile, steel sheet and leather goods industries.

About two-thirds of the concentration carried out up to the end of 1941 was done by voluntary agreement arrived at through intra-industry discussion. In industries where difficulties arose causing long delays in agreeing on a scheme, the Board of Trade itself began to nominate firms to stay open. Those designated or chosen as nucleus firms are given a certificate by the Board of Trade. By May 1942, 4,250 nucleus certificates had been issued and 2,400 establishments had been closed.

Renewed pressure for releases of labour has been placed on all the industries being concentrated; and by May 1942 it was estimated that about 205,000 workers had been released, with an additional 22,000 expected to be displaced in the near future. The total number of workers released appears to be rather small

<sup>1</sup> Such as pottery, perfumery, cutlery, light leather goods, musical instruments, blown glass, lace, jewelry, photographic goods, and fancy plastic goods.

<sup>2</sup> Such as cotton and woollen and worsted textiles, paper and paper boxes, and boots and shoes.

<sup>3</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 15 July 1941, cols. 469-470.

at first sight. However, industries selected for concentration had already lost, by voluntary transference and drift, many thousands of workers (estimated at over 100,000) during the period when their operations had been curtailed by the limitation of supplies or raw materials controls. Secondly, large sections of many of the concentrated industries are engaged on important Government work and have a continuing need for their labour (for example, jewelry firms which are now doing war work). When these two factors are taken into consideration, a displacement of 225,000 workers is a sizeable contribution to war production.

In industries which worked out their own concentration scheme (usually in consultation with representatives of the Ministry of Labour and the Board of Trade) or where the Board of Trade nominated firms, the list of nucleus firms and the proposed labour arrangements were submitted by the Board of Trade to the Ministry of Labour, and circulated by the Ministry to its Regional Controllers, for comment regarding the suitability of the firms chosen from the labour supply point of view.<sup>1</sup> It is within the power of the Ministry of Labour to refuse to agree to the issue of a nucleus certificate if it considers that to do so would create an impossible or unnecessarily difficult labour supply situation. This power of veto has naturally to be used with discretion; and in fact what disagreement has arisen in particular cases has almost invariably been obviated by discussion between the officials of the Board of Trade and the Ministry and representatives of the industry concerned.<sup>2</sup>

In firms designated as nucleus firms, an estimate is made by the technical staff of the Board of Trade, working in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, of the number and types of workers who will be needed to carry on production; and the sum total of these workers becomes the "permitted labour force" of the firm.<sup>3</sup> This labour

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<sup>1</sup> The regional offices pass this information on to the employment exchanges, which consult the firms concerned and give their opinion as to whether the labour to be released is placeable or not. These data are transmitted by the region to headquarters with recommendations either for acceptance or for modification of the scheme.

<sup>2</sup> If a matter of principle arises, the question is sometimes discussed by the Industrial and Export Council of the Board of Trade. This has happened in very few cases.

<sup>3</sup> In the boot and shoe industry, the "permitted labour force" for each establishment was arrived at under the direction of a Controller, who was a former boot and shoe manufacturer (whose plant had been closed by the concentration scheme), with the assistance of a trade unionist from the industry. Each firm was allotted a certain quota of raw material and was supposed to turn out a specified quantity of footwear. On this basis, it informed the Controller of its labour requirements, and he was responsible for examining them and reaching a final decision as to the number of each class of operatives that was essential for this output. In the hosiery industry, on the other hand, committees of employers and workers examined the firms' applications for their permitted labour forces and made the decisions.



force is granted a fairly full measure of protection by the employment exchanges. In dealing with questions of deferment from military service, in allocating contracts, and in distributing raw materials, the status of the factory as a nucleus firm is taken into account. At the same time, however, the nucleus firms must release their mobile workers and substitute for them immobile workers wherever possible. Where mobile women workers of registrable ages were left after concentration, they are taken gradually through the operation of the Registration for Employment Order. In the most important concentrated industries, these workers are not taken until suitable substitutes are available; but in the less essential industries, they may be withdrawn even though no substitutes are available.<sup>1</sup>

Non-nucleus firms, on the other hand, receive no protection. Their labour force is drawn away from them, their raw materials are not guaranteed, they will not (as a rule) receive further Government contracts. However, they often do not, as in theory they should, automatically go out of business. Many of them manage to cling tenaciously to a precarious sort of existence, hand-to-mouth though it may be. As a result, the anticipated release of workers does not always take place; and additional pressure has to be exerted by the Ministry of Labour and the Board of Trade in order to ensure that the workers are in fact made available for other employment. Again, a factory engaged partly in operations

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<sup>1</sup> The Board of Trade has sent the following notice to all nucleus firms in certain of the industries which are being concentrated:

(1) The demand for men and women for the forces and munitions has now reached a point at which it has become necessary to take every man of military age and every mobile woman who is not indispensably engaged on work of national importance . . .

(2) Up to the present the Ministry of Labour, in the endeavour to give nucleus firms as much protection for their labour as possible, has tried not to withdraw "mobile" women workers of registrable age from nucleus firms until suitable substitutes were available. The Board of Trade regret that because of the increasingly urgent demand for workers for the war industries it will not be possible in your industry to allow the withdrawal of all women workers of registrable age to wait upon the provision by the Ministry of Labour of older women as substitutes. You are, therefore, strongly advised to take immediate steps to obtain and train substitutes for any young workers still in your employment, in case it should be necessary to withdraw them. The Local Officers of the Ministry of Labour will continue to do their utmost to help you to obtain these substitutes; but you may be able to help yourselves by appealing to married women who have left your employment to return to work, and it is expected that you will make efforts to do this.

(3) You may be assured that it is not intended that your production should be gravely curtailed by hasty or excessive withdrawals especially of key women. The Board of Trade have already made representations to the Ministry of Labour to this effect, and are ready to intervene with the Ministry, whether directly or through their Regional Representatives, where it can be shown that the threatened withdrawals will gravely curtail production.

(4) This notice does not apply to those of your workers who are entirely engaged on Government work.

subject to concentration and partly in some form of war work may, with the best will in the world, switch some portion of its production to war work. Although this may be practical in some cases, in others it may have the serious disadvantage that the workers concerned will not be occupied on work of the highest priority. Their placement on such work can only be ensured if the labour in question is made available directly to the employment exchange officials, who can then allocate it in accordance with the priority policy fixed for the various job vacancies that exist in essential industry.

Aside from various forms of indirect pressure, one sanction which can be taken against non-nucleus firms in order to compel them to release labour or space is to requisition the premises. This is not always practicable, however, since many such premises are suitable neither for war production nor for storage purposes. In such circumstances, severe criticism could be raised against the Government for requisitioning property which it could not use. Another form of pressure that has been used is the sending of the following letter to all non-nucleus firms or to firms in an industry where no concentration scheme had yet been accepted:

#### CONCENTRATION OF PRODUCTION

I am directed by the Board of Trade to inform you that the Ministry of Labour have been notified that the establishment mentioned below is a non-nucleus establishment. The Board have informed the Ministry of Labour that in accordance with the policy of concentrating production, the labour employed in this establishment is immediately available for transference to work of national importance.

This notice not only warns the employer of his position (thereby encouraging him to hasten his arrangements) but it also enables the employment exchange officers to arrange for a survey of the plant's labour force and for the subsequent withdrawal of those workers suitable either for munitions production or for substituting for other workers who could transfer to munitions work.

From the point of view of labour supply, the net of the Ministry of Labour could be spread rather wider under the concentration of production scheme than under the Registration for Employment Order, because women above the registered age classes could be called for interview at an employment exchange, although less direct pressure could be placed on them to transfer against their will to war work. Large numbers of older workers have been drawn into useful work in this way. Since many of them have worked for years in the industry from which they have been released by concentration, the efforts of the employment exchanges are frequently directed towards persuading them to accept employment in a nuc-

leus firm where mobile workers could be released or where a deficiency of labour has arisen. In such cases, the National Service Officers might in appropriate cases issue written directions to a woman over registrable age who had refused to accept employment in a nucleus firm in her own industry. On the other hand, they would probably not consider it advisable to issue directions to such a woman had she refused to accept employment in another industry.

The total number of workers displaced from non-nucleus firms as a result of concentration is not, of course, equal to the total number of workers who are subsequently absorbed into vital war work. In the first place, as soon as it becomes known that an industry is being considered for concentration, a drift of labour away from the industry begins to take place. The younger, more adaptable workers may take up war work, but they may also move to other non-essential work; the older, less adaptable workers may leave the employment market altogether.<sup>1</sup> This tendency for the labour force to drift away in an unplanned manner has been particularly serious in an industry like the cotton industry which has always employed large numbers of married women and which has been through long years of depression involving under-employment and low earnings. Now that many of these women's husbands have found jobs, the women leave their work declaring quite openly that their husbands should "keep" them. In this way as many as 10,000 workers were lost to the cotton industry in Lancashire. Short of written directions, it is impossible for the employment exchanges to bring large numbers of them back into the employment market; and written directions are generally precluded because the women can claim household responsibilities.

In the absence of complete control of employment in all the industries being or about to be subjected to concentration, Great Britain has found that there is no single answer to the problem of labour drift from industries being concentrated but that a combination of several methods of controlling the movement of labour, if introduced soon enough in the process of contraction and concentration, can reduce the problem to relatively minor dimensions. Through the Industry (Records and Information) Order, which

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Amalgamated Engineering Union: "Officials sitting in Government departments may calculate that the release of some scores of thousands of women workers from factories scheduled for closing down under the Concentration of Production scheme provides an equal number of scores of thousands for munition production. In practice it does not work out that way. Evidence could be produced to show that where some thousands of workers are made available for munition production by the closing down of other factories, perhaps one-third or one-fourth are drafted into munitions work, but quite as many are lost sight of altogether, and a considerable number remain jobless or drift into other occupations, and many trickle back eventually to their original employment." *A.E.U. Monthly Journal*, October 1941, p. 258.

requires employers to prepare and maintain a record of their labour force, the employment exchanges can check up and obtain information as to the number of people who have left any particular firm over a certain period, together with their names and addresses. This Order was not, in fact, applied until late in October 1941—too late to prevent the cotton industry from suffering heavily, but not too late to be helpful in the other industries being concentrated. If it had been applied from the moment each industry was first considered for concentration, much of the problem of drift could have been brought under control at the start. Although the Order is of unquestionable value, yet in practice it imposes a very difficult task on the already heavily-burdened employment exchanges. For the younger women workers, the Employment of Women (Control of Engagement) Order helps to prevent drift; but it applies only to unmarried, widowed or divorced women between the ages of 18 and 31, and can only be useful after the employment exchanges have been able to track down the women. The "concentration register", made by officials of the employment exchanges (or submitted by the management to the exchanges) at the time of concentration, may also be useful in locating the workers released by concentration, and can be used for this purpose along with the data supplied by the Records and Information Order. This register does not include workers who have left their jobs on their own initiative before the day on which the register is compiled, and there is always additional leakage because the register is not compulsory.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the nucleus certificates are now being reinforced in the concentrated industries which are engaged in important work by scheduling nucleus firms under the Essential Work Orders and thereby freezing the permitted labour force of these firms. The application of the employment controls of the Essential Work Order does not preclude the withdrawal of labour but it does preclude its spontaneous drift away from the industry.

Within the general problem of leakage of displaced workers, a particular problem of absorbing supervisory personnel has arisen. Despite an acute shortage of supervisory staff in war industries, some of those released from the concentrated industries were not being placed where the need for their services was greatest. One

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<sup>1</sup> The concentration register is compiled by the local exchanges, which generally send staff to the employer's premises, find office space there and record particulars of the workers being released. These records are filed alphabetically in firm order, each worker on a separate card. Since both the employers and the workers are inclined to be aggrieved at being "dug up", it is often impossible to obtain a complete record. A worker released by concentration and registered receives a card, which he is supposed to keep as proof of his release from a concentrated industry and which is supposed eventually to facilitate his return to his old job.

explanation for this lies in the traditional prejudice which some white-collar workers still appear to have against passing through an employment exchange. Special Appointments Offices have been opened in order to deal with non-industrial workers; and more vigorous efforts on their part to find and to place these workers will probably help to employ supervisory staff in work where they can be most useful.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the problem of a leakage of workers to other less essential work or to no work at all, there is the related problem of finding the employment best suited to the workers released. In principle, the labour released is supposed to be adaptable and capable of being easily absorbed into war industry or as substitutes for workers who can take up war jobs. In fact, of course, a great many workers released are both immobile and inadaptable. Many older workers, in particular, after having worked for years in one industry, have a deeply-rooted dislike of going into a new type of work. Large numbers of these inadaptable workers can only be absorbed into another industry with disproportionate difficulty and discontent. As many of them as possible are, of course, taken on in nucleus firms; and more and more pressure is being placed on these firms by the Ministry of Labour to ensure that this is done. Moreover, it has been found useful to grant nucleus certificates with a good deal of flexibility in order to take account of these inadaptable pockets. For this reason, a nucleus certificate may be given in an area where there is a great unsatisfied demand for munitions workers and where the firm is in direct competition for labour with war factories. In other words, in certain circumstances it may be useful, even in very difficult labour supply areas, to leave a concentrated industry in a skeleton-like existence primarily because particular inadaptable workers may be of greater service by continuing at their old work than they would if efforts, probably fruitless, were made to transfer them to more essential work.

The concentration of production has been carried on hand in hand with the location of new munitions undertakings and the placing of Government contracts. As was mentioned before, the Ministry of Labour is consulted in both these matters and makes every effort, on the one hand, to divert new plants and contracts into easy labour areas, and on the other, to press concentration in difficult areas.

Finally, the absorption of displaced workers into war industry has been conditioned to a very large extent on the progress of

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<sup>1</sup> The Select Committee on National Expenditure, stating that this matter requires constant attention, has urged that "as great care should be taken in placing these persons as in placing industrial workers".

dilution arrangements and of the training schemes. Many of the most important trade unions in war industry have not yet been satisfied that the best use is being made of skilled labour. They contend that the skills of some of their members are being wasted. So long as this is true, they are unwilling to cede the necessity for extending dilution. They likewise insist that the transfer of masses of unskilled labour is not an automatic process. They protest against the "slap-dash registration of workers in less essential trades", followed by large-scale transfers. "As we write", declared the Amalgamated Engineering Union's *Monthly Journal* in October 1941, "comes the announcement that the Minister of Labour has decided to withdraw from the retail trades, other than food trades, all women aged 20 to 25, inclusive, with a view to their employment in war trades of more vital importance. Well and good: but although the Ministry of Labour has secured the good will and co-operation of the employers and trade unions in the retail trades to effect this withdrawal, we are not aware of any consultation with the unions and employers' organisations in the munition trades on the absorption of these young women into essential war work."<sup>1</sup> This problem has tended to diminish with the passing of time, however, and the unions have been somewhat reassured by the cautious and common-sense approach of the Ministry of Labour to the transference problem.

As experience has accumulated in the concentration of production, the scheme has become increasingly flexible. It is more frequently used to help in dealing with specific bottleneck demands or particular plants.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it has been modified to meet the special requirements of particular industries.<sup>3</sup> Now that the less essential industries are being more ruthlessly sacrificed in the war effort and the limitation of supplies is becoming far more drastic, some further concentration of industries which have already been concentrated will be bound to occur. Since labour is more and more a bottleneck, the Ministry of Labour can probably take advantage of this process to enforce some of the principles on which compromises were reached in the first concentration. It may now be possible, for example, to transplant some industries (such as toilet preparations and leather handbags) to easy labour supply areas, thereby relieving the pressure in the difficult areas and releasing labour where it can be absorbed.<sup>4</sup> The Ministry of Labour is

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<sup>1</sup> *A.E.U. Monthly Journal*, October 1941, p. 258.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 74-77, below.

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 76-78, below.

<sup>4</sup> In such cases the Factory Controller would find the premises and the Ministry of Labour would direct a few key workers to accompany the firms, the rest being available locally.

also in a position to be more severe in agreeing on the number and location of nucleus firms and in the calculation of the permitted labour force of these establishments. On the other hand, labour needs are constantly changing; and some industries which have been concentrated are having to be expanded once more. In cotton manufacturing, for example, where demand has changed considerably in recent months, over 10,000 workers released from the industry must be brought back to it again (many of them from important munitions work)—a retransference which will raise many difficult problems.

As a whole, the general concentration of production scheme has been of great value in drawing labour and factory space into the war effort. It made possible a reasonably well-ordered transfer of labour from less essential to essential activity at a stage in the war economy when this was an absolute necessity.

(b) *Arrangements for Transfers to Meet Specific Local Needs*

The concentration of production scheme was intended to help meet the over-all anticipated demand for war workers. The scheme, although flexible, was necessarily general in scope and it was difficult and often impossible to know precisely when and where labour would be released under it and how many of these workers could be used for war production. There was a need, within its framework, for further measures whereby the specific labour needs of particular munitions factories could be met quickly and with the least possible inter-local transference of labour. A variety of arrangements, some of them informal and many of them ingenious, have therefore been made to bring about these transfers. Most of them are linked with the concentration of production scheme, while others are independent of it. It is not possible to describe or even to catalogue these many and varied special arrangements; but one or two examples may indicate why and how they are put into effect.

In June 1941, there was an urgent demand for iron ore. The boot and shoe industry was asked by the Government departments concerned to find, on a voluntary basis, a specified number of boot and shoe workers for employment in iron ore mining, largely because it was thought that many of these workers had had previous experience in iron ore mining. "The most exhaustive enquiry failed, however, to discover more than a handful of such operatives . . .", the union officers reported.<sup>1</sup> In July, the officers of the

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<sup>1</sup> The account of the transfer of men from the boot and shoe to the iron ore mining industry is given in the August 1941 *Monthly Report* of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives (pp. 321-323).

Ministry of Labour again stated that the urgent demand for 600 men for iron ore mining must be met from the boot and shoe industry at a rate of about 150 men during each of the following 4 weeks. The next step (after the matter was discussed by the industry with the Regional Controller) was to establish the principles for making the required transfer without unfairness between firm and firm, district and district, or man and man. It was found that the most likely source of labour for transfer was among the men who were to be called for military service at Stage C of the Schedule of Reserved Occupations and Protected Work. Nearly 2,400 workers in the industry would be de-reserved, and approximately a quarter of them would therefore be needed for transfer to iron ore mining. The regional representative of the Ministry said that all men within this group would be called for interview, and the following outline of procedure was circulated:

The agreed procedure at the interviews with the men at the local Employment Exchange is that the man is asked in the first instance whether he will volunteer. He is at liberty to put forward any considerations which may prevent him from volunteering and these will be noted by the Ministry of Labour officials. In those interviews which have taken place the men have frequently stated that although they are not prepared to volunteer, they have no objection to being ordered to transfer to the iron ore quarries if the competent authorities decide that it is in the national interest for them to perform that kind of national service. If a sufficient supply of labour for transfer to the iron ore quarries is not forthcoming on a voluntary basis, it will be necessary for the Ministry of Labour to make a compulsory allocation under the powers which it possesses for that purpose.

In order to maintain a fair balance as between firm and firm and district and district, the Ministry of Labour will consult the boot and shoe industry through local panels. These panels are being set up and will meet for this purpose on the following dates provisionally arranged . . .

The panels will also advise the Ministry of Labour with regard to the principles on which applications from employers for retention of men from transfer to the iron ore industry should be dealt with, but the panels will not adjudicate on the cases of individual men.<sup>1</sup>

The local panels helped to smooth over difficulties concerning transport and allowances, food, clothing, canteen provision and other such matters; and the union representatives, according to their report to the membership, "effected safeguards which might not otherwise have been considered". The panels also discussed the future position of the transferred employees, both in regard to military service and to re-employment in the boot and shoe industry. On the second point, the workers were assured "that the employers would regard such operatives as having been called up for military service and their old job would be available to them at subsequent date if applied for".

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<sup>1</sup> *Monthly Report, loc. cit.*



After these negotiations, the transfers began to take place. Although both employers and workers were inconvenienced, they recognised "national need" and co-operated to meet it. As the officers of the Union declared:

The compulsory character of the proceedings is irksome and one to which we do not take very kindly—the nature of the work, the financial sacrifices which members concerned have to make, the discomforts, journeyings and other inconveniences, are all important and not easily to be surmounted . . . The necessity was represented to us as being one immediately vital to our national interests. We have pledged our aid unstintingly to the successful prosecution of the war effort, and, despite the serious effect which the transfer has had on the manpower and productive capacity of the industry in Northants, we must regard the transfer as being in the national interest, and one further vital contribution which the industry has made to the war effort. We would ask our members who have been thus transferred to regard the transfer in this light, and to accept the burden and the inconveniences with that grim purposefulness which our pledge implies.<sup>1</sup>

Within the general framework of the concentration of production scheme, various arrangements have also been made whereby particular firms in less essential industries agree to release the number of workers required to meet the labour requirements of nearby munitions factories. This has been encouraged by the Ministry of Labour, since in this way workers are released in the districts where they can be used for war work, and many difficult problems of housing, allowances and feeding are therefore avoided. In one case, for example, a firm engaged in non-essential manufacturing agreed at the request of the Ministry of Labour to release several hundred of its young women employees (all women between the ages of 20 to 24) in order to meet the labour demands of a nearby royal ordnance factory. The actual transfer of these workers was made as easy as possible for both the employer and the workers concerned. A meeting was held at which management and trade union representatives explained why the transfer was necessary and how it was to take place. The management told the workers that when the national emergency was over it hoped to be able "to welcome back to their present position all loyal and patriotic employees who have responded to their country's call in the hour of need". Officials of the Ministry of Labour came to the factory to give particulars of the job in the munitions plant and to interview the women about to be released; and medical officers came to give a medical examination. Any woman who could not be absorbed immediately in the ordnance factory was instructed to remain in her present employment. Other examples of a similar "contraction of industry on a local basis" were given in the Govern-

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.

ment's Statement relating to Production, published in the *Twenty-Fifth Report from The Select Committee on National Expenditure* (1940-1941 Session):

. . . In one very difficult area local industry has, with the co-operation of the Board of Trade and the Supply Departments, been so contracted that the demands of newly established and highly important war factories are being satisfactorily met. In another district agreement has been reached under which 50 per cent. of the present labour force in the hat and clothing trades will be withdrawn for war industry. In the London area the light clothing trade and the hat industry have been required to release 50 per cent. of their labour force as it stood at the 1st May last.<sup>1</sup>

In practice, these schemes for specialised local concentration have been more successful in places of limited size than in large and diversified areas like London. In the larger areas, the wider and more sweeping approach of the Registration for Employment Order is more practical than the more limited approach possible through the local concentration of particular less essential industries. In smaller and less diversified areas, however, the local concentration of production schemes are sufficiently flexible to be a highly useful method of withdrawing the labour needed for nearby war factories.

The Minister of Labour has often emphasised the importance of these varied arrangements to meet specific labour needs of war factories. He declared that they evidence "a new spirit" in industrial organisation for war:

I will cite an example of one great firm from which about 2,000 young women can be released. Discussion took place between the firm and my divisional controller, and the firm is going to carry on until I am ready to take those young women one by one, two by two or by dozens, and transfer them in an orderly way. That is a great, patriotic and wise thing to do. The employer in that great establishment says, "For the rest of the war I will retain every woman who is not of the correct physical standard for your factories, and I will take everyone who falls ill and finds that she cannot carry through. I will carry on the best I can, and I will give you the best of my staff for your great factories." Let that spirit and example imbue others throughout the country.<sup>2</sup>

### (c) *Labour Withdrawals by Simplification of Product*

In connection with the concentration of food processing industries, a new principle for withdrawing labour has been introduced namely, the simplification of the product and its packing with a view to releasing potential war workers or substitutes. Up to June 1942, this principle was being applied in chocolate and sugar confectionery, biscuits, bacon curing, aerated waters and processed cheese.

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<sup>1</sup> Pp. 28-29.

<sup>2</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 29 July 1941, cols. 1370-1371.

The position in the food trades differed from that in the other concentrated industries. The volume of production had to remain virtually as it was; and the object of concentration schemes in the food industries has been to redistribute production by cutting the volume in the difficult labour supply areas and taking it up in the easier areas. The scheme for chocolate and sugar confectionery, for example, provides for the release of labour by two methods. The first is by the direct release of labour from firms closed or partially closed in the process of concentration. The second is by means of the simplification of product. Plain, block chocolate is to be produced and no firm is allowed to produce chocolate or sugar confectionery with more than 5 workers per ton per week. Moreover, if a firm was so well organised that in December 1941 it was using less than 5 workers per ton per week (for example, 3 or 3.5 workers per ton per week), then it must continue to produce on that standard rather than attempt to increase the labour used. Efforts are being made, however, to lower the general standard; and most firms are co-operating to make this possible. In Liverpool, for instance, a dozen firms have agreed to produce with no more than 3.5 workers per ton per week and meanwhile are releasing all labour in excess of 5 workers per ton per week. In the biscuit industry, one further step has been added. First, there is the direct release of labour from firms closing either wholly or partially and with an output not exceeding 25,000 tons per year. Second, no firm is allowed to use more than 5 workers (operative and non-operative) per ton per week; and this standard will probably be lowered. Third, no firm is permitted to manufacture more than 20 lines of biscuits and great simplification has been introduced in assorting and packing.

The same principle of releasing labour by means of standardising the product or processes in its manufacture may be applicable to other industries outside the food trades. Utility clothing has been introduced mainly to save cloth, for example, but it will probably simplify the industry's labour requirements at the same time. There are many other industries which, through economising in raw material, may be able to economise in labour by simplification of product.

#### (d) *Labour Withdrawals and Hours of Work*

Despite these measures for transferring labour from less essential to war work, the numbers of war workers actually forthcoming were still insufficient to meet the current and anticipated needs of the munitions industries. The Ministry of Labour therefore decided, in May 1942, to broaden its field of attack and to investigate the

hours being worked in undertakings in the non-munitions industries (including the nucleus firms under the concentration of production scheme) with a view to forcing further releases of labour.

The examination of hours of work in relation to a firm's labour requirements is being made in a practical manner. If a firm is found to be working less than a full work week (defined as 52 hours per week, exclusive of meal breaks, for industrial work and 46 hours per week, exclusive of meal breaks, for office work), there is a good *prima facie* case for refusing to leave the firm's existing labour force intact, for pressing the compulsory withdrawal of the younger women workers and for dealing without leniency with an employer's application for deferment of staff called under the National Service Act. In special circumstances, it might not be desirable to apply this general principle. If, for example, an industry or an undertaking employs large numbers of married women with household responsibilities, it might not be practicable to increase hours of work up to the prescribed standard. Again, in a small undertaking employing only a few people on any one operation, a worker might have to be kept on even though the volume would not justify extending his hours up to the standard. Even where an industry or undertaking cannot increase its general working hours, however, individual workers who could work longer hours are to be withdrawn and substituted for any suitable women who, for domestic or other reasons, cannot work the longer hours.

This policy has not been operating long enough to evaluate the results produced by it. It is clearly a logical step in the gradual but marked tightening of all measures affecting the non-munitions industries. It is being applied with flexibility and linked with the other action being taken to withdraw and transfer labour.

#### TRANSFERS WITHIN PARTICULAR INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS

The general schemes for mobilising and transferring labour to war industries and the special plans for concentrating resources on essential work left one major gap to be filled. They did not ensure full utilisation of the labour force of industries in which, for one reason or another, labour requirements tend to fluctuate considerably in wartime. Thus, special arrangements have been made to promote labour mobility within particular industry or occupational groups in order to make it possible to employ workers with rare skills at their full capacity and to satisfy the varying requirements of establishments within the industries. For the most part, these arrangements have been worked out within the frame of the Essential Work Orders, which assigned to the industries concerned

a more or less stable labour force. They are an attempt to encourage some of the main branches of war industry to assume the responsibility for using their labour economically and effectively and, by farming out this responsibility to them, to ease the general labour supply position.

(a) *Transfer of Dock Labour*

The primary need of the docks is for a highly mobile labour force, ready and able to shift quickly from one port to another as required to meet unexpected shipping diversions of wartime. Plans for ensuring mobility among dockers were under consideration even before the outbreak of hostilities and have been in continuous evolution during the war period. The Minister of Labour called attention to the need for more satisfactory organisation of port labour in January 1941, stating:

The use of manpower, both in handling cargo and in building and repair, must be improved. The casual nature of the work must go. If we are to impose obligations and to insist on continuity of effort, it cannot be done on the basis of our past methods of picking up a man one moment and dropping him the next. The solution to this problem is a permanent, organised and mobile labour force, good co-ordinated management, and a utilisation of every available facility.<sup>1</sup>

Schemes now in effect are directed towards an almost complete decasualisation of dock labour, combined with procedures for shifting dockers from one port to another in accordance with the pressure of work in the industry. At present, the Ministry of War Transport is the employer of dockers in Merseyside and Clyde ports; and in the other ports, control over employment is the general responsibility of the National Dock Labour Corporation (a tripartite agency) which administers plans approved under the Essential Work (Dock Labour) Order by the Minister of Labour and National Service for each port.<sup>2</sup> Although these two schemes differ in some respects, dock workers have generally similar rights and obligations as regards transfer under both.

In order to qualify for the guaranteed wage provided under the schemes, a dock worker must report at specified control points regularly, and work a minimum of 11 turns during each full week, with such additional turns as are considered necessary and reasonable by the Labour Superintendent of the port. Moreover, he must agree to travel as required to any port or place for the purpose of

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 21 January 1941, col. 87.

<sup>2</sup> The Board of Directors of the Corporation consists of a chairman and a finance member appointed by the Minister of Labour and National Service, and six other members nominated to represent both sides of the industry by the National Joint Council.

performing work of specified kinds on the conditions laid down in an Interim Agreement covering the transfer of dock workers.<sup>1</sup>

These conditions are the following:

(1) A dock worker covered by a scheme administered by the National Dock Labour Corporation who is transferred for work in accordance with the scheme is entitled (subject to reporting for work as required and to accepting suitable work) to attendance money at the rate of 5s. for each of the 11 half-days during any week on which he attends for work but is not allocated to employment or engaged for work.

(2) A dock worker covered by a scheme administered by the Ministry of War Transport who is transferred for work in another port not covered by such a scheme is guaranteed a minimum of 11 turns each week. If he actually works less than this minimum number, the difference between the number worked and the minimum (subject to reporting for and accepting suitable work) is credited to him at 7s. 6d. per turn.<sup>2</sup>

(3) A dock worker transferred under these conditions is entitled, for time spent travelling (directly or indirectly), to such attendance money or guarantee payment as he would have received had he attended the normal calls which he missed because of his transfer to the new port.

(4) A dock worker not yet covered by either of the above schemes and transferred for work in another port is entitled to attendance money at the rate of 5s. for each of the 11 half days in each week of his transfer on which he reports for work but is not allocated to employment or engaged for work.

(5) In all other respects, a dock worker who is transferred from one port to another receives the agreed rates of pay and working conditions applicable to local dock labour in the port to which he is transferred.

(6) A dock worker who is transferred to a port outside daily travelling distance receives in advance a travelling allowance of 5s. for his journey to and from his home port.

(7) A transferred dock worker is entitled to a daily subsistence allowance of 5s. for each day that he remains in the port to which he has been sent.

(8) If a transferred dock worker falls sick or is injured in the port to which he was transferred, and cannot resume work within a short time, arrangements must be made for his return (if he can travel). He remains entitled to his daily subsistence allowance for a period of not more than 3 weeks; and a free return ticket may be granted to his wife (or near relative) to enable her to visit him in his port of transfer.

As a result of this Interim Agreement, there is little to choose between conditions for transferred dockers working under the

<sup>1</sup> The first basic arrangements were made through an agreement of 6 October 1939 between the Minister of Labour, the National Council of Port Labour Employers and the Transport Workers' Union. These arrangements were modified during 1940 and 1941; and a new Interim Agreement was made in February 1942 (effective 9 March 1942), to operate pending the completion of a National Transfer Agreement. The Interim Agreement was made by the Ministry of Labour and National Service, the Ministry of War Transport, the National Dock Labour Corporation, and the National Joint Council for Dock Labour.

<sup>2</sup> Any established overtime or night shift period of between 6 and 9 consecutive hours counts as 2 turns; in general, a turn is any standard period of engagement of 4 hours.

Ministry of War Transport scheme and those covered by the Corporation scheme. The transfer of dock workers has been organised in a practical manner and with varying arrangements to meet special circumstances. For instance, in one case several hundred London dockers were sent up to the Clyde and, for the purpose of facilitating the loading and unloading of cargo on a particular job, London conditions of work were transplanted with them and established in that "pocket" only. In another case, dockers who were specialists in handling a meat cargo were sent from London to another port which did not specialise in this type of cargo; and the dockers in the latter port agreed that since the London men were specialists, they could receive London rates and conditions for the job. Priority of work is given to dock workers in the locality unless an away-from-home docker is already engaged on the job; if this is the case, the latter continues his work until the ship is finished, notwithstanding the fact that a home docker may have become unemployed in the meantime owing to the completion of work on another ship. In practice, the dock workers who are transferred are usually specialists in particular cargoes or are such men as are available after the best or established dockers have been taken on in their home ports.

Transferred dockers have complained that local men picked their jobs at will regardless of the rights of transferred dockers and that they chose the better jobs, leaving the more disagreeable ones to the transferred men. These complaints were taken up by the men's union, and most of them were dealt with satisfactorily by improving the methods of allocating men to work at any one port and by the provisions of the Interim Agreement noted above. Another series of complaints has centred around welfare conditions for transferred dockers. Far too little action has been taken to ensure that away-from-home dockers have proper billets, canteen and transport facilities and other basic amenities. Only in Glasgow have the welfare conditions been satisfactory; and this has apparently been due to the presence of an enterprising woman welfare officer who has successfully handled the problems of dockers coming into Glasgow. Efforts are now being made by the union to extend the Interim Agreement to embrace all aspects of welfare and to establish adequate welfare facilities in all ports.

While the transfer scheme had its initial application to the ports under Ministry of War Transport control, the arrangements being made by the National Dock Labour Corporation for the other ports are considered to contain more permanent elements for a full national agreement covering transferred workers. They mark the beginnings of national regulation of subsistence and attendance

allowances, welfare facilities, and rights and obligations in regard to transfer. The gradual elimination of the differences between the Ministry of War Transport and the Corporation schemes will make it easier to obtain some national regulation but the Government does not wish prematurely to press its efforts to merge the schemes and place the whole dock labour organisation in the hands of the National Dock Labour Corporation.

*(b) Transfer of Shipyard Workers*

The supply and distribution of shipyard labour are controlled in each principal shipyard area by a special joint body, the District Shipyard Control, which is made up of representatives, of the Ministry of Labour and National Service and the Admiralty. Advisory Committees of employers' and workers' representatives, known as district Consultative Committees, are attached to each Control and advise on procedures for transferring shipyard labour, the dilution of skill, conditions of work and welfare, etc., The Executive Officers of the Shipyard Controls are known as District Shipyard Controllers, responsible to the Controls.

Under the Essential Work (Shipbuilding and Ship-repairing) Order, which was applied to the industry in March 1941, all engagements of workers for employment in the industry are made through the employment exchanges or approved trade union arrangements, and dismissals and resignations are under the direct supervision of the District Shipyard Controllers.<sup>1</sup> In this way, it is possible to regulate the flow of labour into and within the industry.

Moreover, under the Essential Work Order for the industry, the Shipyard Controllers may group together several undertakings in scheduling them in the register in order to secure the best use of the available labour. Groups of employers have been formed for this purpose; and workers employed by any of these grouped undertakings may be transferred as required from one to another of the undertakings within the group without the permission of the Shipyard Controller or the giving of a week's notice, merely by notifying the Controller (and the local employment exchange) that the transfer has taken place.

Finally, in certain districts, agreements have been reached between the employers' association and the trade unions whereby, in order to facilitate transference, a daily travelling allowance is paid to shipyard workers who are temporarily transferred from one yard for work at another yard at a greater distance from their homes. Men transferred beyond daily travelling distance are eligible

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<sup>1</sup> S.R. & O. 1941, No. 300.



for the usual allowances paid by the Ministry of Labour to transferred war workers.

Wage differentials, both by occupation and by district, have constituted an important barrier to labour mobility among ship-building and ship-repairing workers. In particular, it has been difficult to transfer men from ship-repairing to shipbuilding work, partly because of a difference in wages and partly because the organisation and character of ship-repairing work is preferred by workers accustomed to it. Efforts are being made to eliminate some of the more illogical wage differentials, but this is a long-term task and one which is left largely to the process of collective bargaining.

Shipbuilding workers from many parts of the country have expressed dissatisfaction with the existing arrangements for the allocation of the available labour. One delegation of shop stewards came to the Government with the suggestion that yards of similar sizes and building generally similar ships should be paired so that men, particularly in the finishing trades, could be easily transferred from one yard to another without an intervening period of unemployment when a ship has been finished. It likewise considered that a minimum rate for all riveters would facilitate the transfer of these men; and that, for repair work, mobile squads of workers of different trades should be formed and should work on nationally agreed rates and conditions wherever they might be sent.

The Government recognises that there is considerable room for improvement in the present arrangements for transferring shipyard workers but it believes that much of this improvement can only be and must be effected by agreement between the employers and workers in the industry.

### *(c) Transfer in the Building and Civil Engineering Industry*

The building industry was reported to have lost 600,000 men from September 1939 to June 1941 as a result of military recruitment and migration to other industries. By the latter month, it was estimated that the industry needed another 50,000 men, mainly labourers<sup>1</sup>; and that if these men were added to the existing labour force of the industry, the supply would be sufficient, if properly used, to meet the demand for building trade workers anticipated at that time.

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<sup>1</sup> Building labourers were not at first reserved from military service under the Schedule of Reserved Occupations; the mistake was later corrected but only after many of them had been called up for service or had found jobs elsewhere.

In order to make better use of the manpower available for the industry, an Essential Work (Building and Civil Engineering) Order was made on 9 June 1941.<sup>1</sup> It follows the general lines of the other Essential Work Orders, with several important exceptions. One exception is that building undertakings may be grouped together regionally. To facilitate this grouping, a regulation was issued requiring all building and civil engineering contractors to register and to provide specified particulars to the Ministry of Works and Buildings. It was planned to use this registration as a basis for organising the industry around regional centres which would set up clearing houses and arrange for undertakings within any region to help one another by the loan of skilled workers, machinery and equipment or in other ways. In addition, a Building and Civil Engineering Labour (Returns) Order was made in October 1941, requiring all registered employers to provide information on the nature of their undertakings and the number of male workers over 16 years of age employed on building and civil engineering work (including maintenance and repairs) on the last pay-day of October; other returns of the same kind have been made during 1942.

Another exception in the Order was that it provided specifically for the formation of a corps of mobile building volunteers, each of whom was to agree, in return for certain special privileges, to go to any place where he might be sent to perform work in his usual occupation at the rate of remuneration usual for that work or, in emergency, to perform work outside his usual occupation which he could reasonably be asked to do. This Corps has never been recruited, however, partly because of the opposition of the trade unions in the industry; and the Government does not intend to go ahead with the scheme in its present form.

By late 1941, there was an acute shortage of certain types of building and civil engineering workers (although the war building programme had passed its peak) and little progress had been made towards organising the industry in such a way as to ensure the most economical use of the limited supply of available labour. Many contractors were causing difficulties by transferring directly from one contract to another workers for whose services the employment exchanges might have had better use and by other practices which were tending to defeat the purpose of the Essential Work Order for the industry. For these reasons, further steps were taken to control the employment and placement of building and civil engineering labour. The Essential Work Order was amended to eliminate the provisions permitting employers to transfer workers

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<sup>1</sup> S.R. & O. 1941, No. 822, replaced by S.R. & O. 1941, No. 2067, as amended by S.R. & O. 1942, No. 591.

to other sites under their general control without the permission of a National Service Officer and allowing them to lend workers to other employers without permission for a period not exceeding 14 days. At about the same time, a Restriction on Transfer Order (dated 18 December 1941 and effective on 12 January 1942) was made under Regulation 58A of the Defence Regulations.<sup>1</sup> The Order is designed to ensure that labour will be moved only to essential work and will be used to best advantage and with the utmost economy. It is intended to prevent any employer from collecting and transferring from one job to another a labour force to which he has no exclusive claim, "thereby possibly denuding a district and preventing other efficient but less fortunate contractors from securing the labour needed to complete important work".<sup>2</sup> In accordance with this Order:

(1) No employer in the building and civil engineering industries may transfer a worker employed on a particular site for employment by him in any other place or cause him to give his services in some other undertaking elsewhere than on that site, unless he receives written permission to do so from a National Service Officer.<sup>3</sup>

(2) A National Service Officer may, on application being made to him in writing, give to any employer in the industries permission to employ any person or persons of any category, in his employment, interchangeably on two or more sites.

(3) Employers are required to notify the National Service Officer of all terminations of employment, together with details regarding the worker's occupation, etc.

(4) All workers on leaving their employment are required to report at an employment exchange not later than the day next following the day on which they leave their jobs.<sup>4</sup>

(5) Directions issued under the Order or permissions given under it may be issued so as to have effect either generally or "as to such area, for such purposes, in such circumstances or for such period as may be specified", or may be cancelled or modified.

Plans for the building industry are altered as war requirements change. Although the peak in the building of war plants had been reached before the summer of 1942, urgent needs connected with military operations have made it necessary to transfer thousands of building operatives to work of strategical importance and therefore to modify plans for contracting the industry and releasing these workers for military service, as had been planned. There has been

<sup>1</sup> The Building and Civil Engineering (Restriction on Transfer) Order, 1941, S.R. & O. 1941, No. 2068.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Labour and National Service, press release of 29 December 1941.

<sup>3</sup> The Minister may make exceptions from time to time, to enable employers to move "key workers and men in special classes of trade which demand mobility and also in certain emergencies". The jobbing builder may be given permission to move his men from job to job within a limited area.

<sup>4</sup> Again, exceptions may be made by the Minister to (3) and (4).

persistent criticism that the present organisation of the building industry is not adapted to the needs for the quick transfer of men from one enterprise to another; but emergency situations are constantly forcing improvements in the arrangements for shifting workers.

*(d) Ring Fence Schemes in the Chemical and Iron and Steel Industries*

The Essential Work Orders applied to the chemical and iron and steel industries have been used not only to assign to each of these industries a relatively stable labour force but also to encourage the industries to take the responsibility for employing this labour as effectively as possible. A protective ring fence has been placed around the labour supplied to these two industries and special arrangements have been made to keep this labour force intact and to meet the varying requirements of firms within each industry by transferring workers from one firm to another. The ring fence implies that no workers (including office staff) may be transferred outside the industries unless their services cannot be used within the industries; and even then they may be transferred outside the ring fence only temporarily, as a rule.

On 5 August 1941, the Minister of Labour and National Service made the Essential Work (Iron and Steel Industry) Order, which brings this industry within the coverage of the provisions of the general Essential Work Order, places other obligations and duties on undertakings in the industry as they are scheduled under the Order, and sets up special machinery for carrying out these tasks.<sup>1</sup> Some sections of the iron and steel industry had at that time to concentrate their operations for the duration of the war, thereby freeing some of their workers for employment either in other sections of the industry in which production had to be increased or in other industries. Therefore, a special labour supply scheme was worked out to secure, in co-operation with the Ministry of Supply, the best use of labour (including women) in the industry as a whole; to facilitate and arrange, through the normal machinery of the Ministry of Labour, the transfer of workers from one operation or undertaking to another; and to obtain any additional labour from outside the industry that might be necessary.

The machinery of control is based on the normal machinery of the Ministries of Labour and Supply; but in addition, local Labour Supply (Iron and Steel) Committees have been set up,

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<sup>1</sup> The Essential Work (Iron and Steel Industry) Order, 1941, dated 5 August 1941, S.R. & O. 1941, No. 1167, as amended by S.R. & O. 1941, No. 1556 and S.R. & O. 1942, No. 131.

together with a central co-ordinating committee, the Central Labour Supply (Iron and Steel) Committee. Each local committee has, as chairman, an officer of the Ministry of Labour, and includes not more than three representatives each of employers and of workers, nominated by the Ministry of Supply after consultation with the organisations of employers and workers concerned; a representative of the area organisation of the Ministry of Supply; and a secretary. The areas covered by the local committees coincide with the civil regions established in the country and therefore with the administrative regions of the Ministry of Labour.

Each scheduled undertaking is supposed to observe the following procedure:

(1) Current labour requirements must be notified to the local office of the Ministry of Labour.

(2) Substantial demands for labour anticipated in the future (such as those arising from the setting into operation of new plants or additional shifts) are to be notified as soon as possible to the local Labour Supply (Iron and Steel) Committee in each area in which the labour will be required, with the approximate date on which the workers will be needed.

(3) Workers are to be engaged only through a local office of the Ministry of Labour.<sup>1</sup>

(4) Particulars of all workers who are not employed to full capacity or who are likely to become surplus are to be notified to the local office of the Ministry of Labour, together with the date on which the workers are expected to become surplus.

(5) If only one part of the undertaking has been brought under the iron and steel labour supply scheme, and other parts have been scheduled jointly with it under the Essential Work (General Provisions) Order or a special Order, workers who become surplus to requirements in the former part of the undertaking may be employed in the latter part, provided that particulars are notified to the local office of the Ministry of Labour so that the workers can be noted as being surplus to the iron and steel industry.

(6) Any appreciable short-time working, whether actual or prospective, is to be reported to the local Labour Supply Committee, with a statement detailing its cause.<sup>2</sup>

A generally similar ring fence scheme has been applied in the chemical industry. It was estimated that some establishments in the industry would require additional workers and that this demand could and should be met by redistribution of labour within the industry. Thus, the Essential Work Order, as amended, has been applied to the chemical industry with generally similar labour supply arrangements to those introduced for the iron and steel industry. Local Labour Supply (Chemical) Committees have been established in seven regions (one committee acting for the London

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of those to be employed as managers, salesmen, office clerks, and domestic workers.

<sup>2</sup> *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, August 1941, pp. 156 and 171; and *Iron and Coal Trades Review*, 8 August 1941, p. 124.

and Southern regions), and their work is co-ordinated through a central committee and, in addition, integrated with the regular machinery of the Ministry of Labour and National Service. The functions of these committees are generally similar to those of the iron and steel committees. If the industry as a whole requires additional workers, these are supplied by the ordinary machinery of the Ministry of Labour and allocated to employment by the special chemical labour supply committees, in consultation with officials of the Ministry of Labour.

As an administrative device, the iron and steel and chemical schemes have, on balance, been useful. These industries were sufficiently well organised to take a large part of the responsibility for handling their labour supply problems; the demand in each of the industries could be met approximately by the labour already available in the industry; and most of the workers in each industry could, by reason of their qualifications, be employed best within, rather than outside, the industry. The character of the work of the committees varies considerably from one region of the country to another in accordance with the importance of the industries in the region and the personnel of the committees. In some regions, most of the executive and administrative work continues to be done by the Ministry of Labour through its normal machinery, while in others the committees take an active part in all the work. They have often been useful in curtailing the procedures of the Ministry of Labour because, specialised as they are, they know where to look for and to find the workers needed to fill particular jobs and can provide the Ministry with the names and qualifications of persons who could and should be transferred elsewhere.

The ring fence schemes have met with considerable criticism on the ground that the freezing of the labour force of each individual industry is apt to lead to less efficient utilisation of labour than if the workers concerned were more free to move outside the ring fence into other war work. Critics of the schemes admit that the ring fence is practical in the case of workers with special qualifications who are unquestionably more useful inside one of these industries than they would be elsewhere; but they claim that for workers without such specialised skill, the ring fence may often lead to uneconomic transfers over the country as a whole and may prevent the most effective allocation of labour among the war industries in a particular region. Moreover, if the labour force of each war industry were to be hedged around by a protective fence like those around the chemical and iron and steel industries, the result would be a ludicrous distribution of labour, given the constantly changing emphasis of the war economy. Finally, it has

been alleged that the ring fences tend to encourage extravagance in the use of labour at a time when the most rigid economy is necessary. In practice, however, the ring fence schemes now in operation are said to have been administered, on the whole, with sufficient practical common sense to have avoided many of these pitfalls.

(e) *Mobile Skilled Corps of Engineering Mechanics*

The shortage of highly skilled labour has often hampered productive operations in the general engineering industries. This was particularly true at the stage of the war effort when many new munitions factories were fully equipped and ready to start producing but were forced to begin operations without an adequate quota of skilled men. In order to overcome this obstacle to output, a National Industrial Mobile Corps of skilled mechanics was recruited by the Ministry of Supply, with the primary function of getting production in new royal ordnance factories under way in the shortest possible time.

Members of the Corps are recruited on a voluntary basis from among the highly skilled workers in several of the royal ordnance factories and sent for temporary duty to other ordnance factories where new operations are being started or where manufacturing difficulties exist. Men trained as machine setters (milling and profiling and all types of turning), toolmakers, turners, millers, grinders, fitters and examiners are especially invited to volunteer for service in the Corps. If accepted by the Ministry of Supply, the men are enrolled in the Corps and are eligible for a retaining fee (a month from the date of their enrolment) on condition that they agree to go to work on special duties in any ordnance factory in any part of the country for a period of from one to two months. Personal factors are taken into consideration (so far as possible) in deciding to which factory a man will be sent, and the notice given him is as long as is practicable.

At the outset, the Corps was divided into squads, each squad containing (for example) several millers, grinders, auto hands and centre lathe turners, a boring machine hand, and a demonstrator for each type of machine. The squad (each member with his tools and personal kit) proceeds to a designated factory and gives intensive instruction to unskilled and less skilled workers in the use of unfamiliar machines. While temporarily employed on these duties, members of the Corps work under the following conditions:

(1) A basic wage rate of 90s., plus a bonus of 37s. 6d. for London and 35s. 6d. for the provinces, for 47 hours of work is paid all men regardless of their trade. This rate is designed to take into account the need for special effort to meet the special conditions of the jobs.

(2) Overtime and night-shift bonuses are payable in accordance with the royal ordnance factory rules. A special bonus of 20s. per week is payable in cases where maximum effort is required and given or in other special circumstances.

(3) All members of the Corps are expected to work such hours as are consistent with the urgency of the case, including overtime and night shifts as directed.

(4) Subsistence allowances and travelling expenses are paid in accordance with the normal practice of the ordnance factories.

(5) The Superintendents of the factories are responsible for finding the men a place to live and to have their meals.

This scheme for transferring skilled men from one royal ordnance factory to another has been applied on a relatively limited scale. The greatest number of men transferred under these arrangements was 460 in December 1941; this had dropped to 388 by February 1942 and has been gradually decreasing. But although the scheme is on a small scale, it has been of practical value in overcoming production bottlenecks. It has been of particular use in starting up operations in new or expanded factories. The squads can be brought into action as industrial shock troops far more quickly than a similar group of skilled men could be mobilised through the normal machinery of the Ministry of Labour; and they can likewise be demobilised and shifted more easily when their special duties have been completed. It has sometimes proved difficult to preserve the mobile character of the squads. Once the men have been working on a particular job for six weeks or two months, they begin to want to settle down in the job, retaining the special pay and conditions of work due them as members of the mobile squads. In order to prevent members of the squads from becoming immobile, the Ministry of Supply has insisted that after a certain period (generally two months) the men should be shifted even though their work might not be quite finished. Although this is a matter of common sense in any particular case, great emphasis is placed on maintaining the principle of mobility; and this can only be done, in the final analysis, by not leaving a particular group of men in a particular plant for an over-long period.

#### (f) *Emergency Machine Tool Armament Corps*

At the request of the Machine Tool Control of the Ministry of Supply, an Emergency Machine Tool Armament Corps was formed by the Machine Tool Trade Association late in 1941.<sup>1</sup> The Corps

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<sup>1</sup> At about the same time, the engineering employers set up eight regional committees to provide for the training of machine tool setters who are to be available for employment wherever they may be needed and not only in the establishments where they are trained.



is composed of over 200 expert operators and demonstrators of machine tools. Members of the Corps are sent, generally (but not always) in squads, to factories where machine tools are idle because of a lack of skilled labour, and there put the tools into service and train "green labour" to set and operate the machines. Before sending a squad to a particular factory in response to a request from the management, the Machine Tool Control verifies that the management can and will provide the necessary influx of labour to be trained and an adequate flow of material. It is emphasised that if these conditions were not fulfilled, no permanent results could be obtained by the temporary loan of highly skilled machine tool workers.

The procedure followed, as a rule, is that requests for the assistance of squads are made to the London headquarters of the Machine Tool Control either by the Services, by individual firms or by area leaders working under the scheme. The firm requesting assistance is then visited by the manager of the Corps, the foreman in charge of all the squads, or the area leader, in order to ascertain the type and degree of help required and to determine the make-up of the squad. London headquarters, advised of the squad required, in turn advises the area leaders what men are to be called upon to transfer to a certain firm or to emergency work within the firm, and it likewise advises the manager of the factory from which the men are withdrawn and the manager of the factory to which the men are being sent.

Members of the Corps work such hours, conditioned by local circumstances, and under such discipline as may be required by the firm to which they are lent. They continue to be paid by their previous regular employers, at the rate of £7 per week, plus £3 subsistence allowance, plus their travelling expenses (demonstrators receive £10 per week plus expenses); and all this expense is debited each month to the Machine Tool Control of the Ministry of Supply. The provision of lodging for the men is the responsibility of the firm to which they are lent.<sup>1</sup>

Like the mobile squads of skilled engineering workers, the Emergency Machine Tool Armament Corps has served a very useful purpose on a limited scale, primarily in training "green" labour in new plants but also in eliminating bottlenecks in other plants.

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<sup>1</sup> The men are paid as staff men and deductions for holiday schemes, etc., do not apply. Income tax and insurance deductions are made as in the past, except that the firm's insurance contribution may be debited to the Machine Tool Control on the monthly account. Liability for workmen's compensation remains the responsibility of the man's parent firm, since technically he is still in their employ.

## TEMPORARY TRANSFERS OF WORKERS

It has frequently proved impossible to keep the skilled workers within any one plant employed continuously at work calling forth their full ability. There have been a good many cases where skilled workers in one plant have been idle while another plant in the vicinity could have used their services on urgent work. Short-time or lack of work may be caused by a variety of factors wholly outside the control of any one employer. Much of it cannot be overcome, of course; but some of it can be eliminated provided that the necessary machinery has been created. Thus, in addition to arrangements for the "permanent" transfer of workers from one job to another, plans have been worked out to facilitate the temporary transfer of workers from one plant to another, generally in order to do the same type of work.

The acute shortage of labour, and particularly of skilled labour, has made it necessary for the Inspectors of Labour Supply to be constantly on the alert for situations in which temporary transfers of workers from one plant to another can overcome or help to overcome production bottlenecks. It is not easy to identify such situations, however. Moreover, it has invariably been difficult to discover the extent to which "idle labour" exists and whether the idle workers are temporarily or permanently surplus to the requirements of an individual plant. Employers have been urged to notify the employment exchanges whenever some of their workers were on short time or temporarily idle; but in practice not many of them do get in touch with the exchanges in regard to temporary redundancies. The Inspectors of Labour Supply alone are not in a position to estimate present and future labour requirements unless they have complete information on the programme planned for each plant. Thus, in the aircraft industry, where many of the complaints of temporarily idle labour centred, a joint inspection was carried out by Inspectors of Labour Supply of the Ministry of Labour and production officers of the Ministry of Aircraft Production, with a view to indicating the supply of labour that was clearly necessary for each plant in the immediate future and showing whether or not there was any considerable maldistribution of labour within the industry. It was suggested that all firms in the industry should be required to have a system of waiting time cards or some other method of ascertaining the true extent of idle labour and that the information so obtained should be scrutinised by the Inspectors of Labour Supply so that they would possess a more accurate basis for determining the need for temporary and other transfers; but this suggestion was not adopted by the Government

primarily because of the administrative difficulties involved in carrying it out.<sup>1</sup>

Aside from the major difficulties of ascertaining the fact and the extent of temporarily idle labour and of identifying the jobs on which temporary labour could be put to good use, the employers did not welcome the practice of lending workers to other employers (particularly to their competitors) since there was no assurance that the workers lent temporarily would return to their old jobs; and the workers did not welcome the prospect of having to leave their jobs and often their homes to take up temporary work elsewhere (especially if the work was paid at lower wages). With resistance from both sides, the Inspectors of Labour Supply and the National Service Officers have been placed in a difficult position. During the heavy raids of 1940-41, however, there was a good deal of temporary transference away from and back to plants damaged by enemy action.

The Essential Work Orders include the provision that a worker who is temporarily surplus to the requirements of one plant may be shifted, in time of emergency, to another plant for a period of not over 14 days, without its being necessary to obtain the written permission of the National Service Officer. The fact that an employer is required to pay a guaranteed wage to the worker, whether the latter is busy or not, is supposed to encourage the employer to notify temporary redundancies of labour. In addition, special arrangements have now been made by the Ministry of Labour to govern the loan of workers whose services have been temporarily surplus in their own plant for over three days. Any such temporary transfers are conditional on three factors: first, that the factory requesting the loan of the worker's services can employ him full time; second, that the worker must return to the first employer when the latter needs his services; and third, that such temporary transfers may not exceed six weeks in length. According to the Government's Statement on Production, published in a Report of the Select Committee on National Expenditure:

The intention of these new arrangements is to give greater assurance to employers that workpeople so lent will return to their factories as soon as work again becomes available, and thus to encourage employers to report temporarily redundant labour. At the same time, it has had to be recognised that where the men are not required by their employer for a considerable time, the possibility of changed circumstances in the meantime (e.g., changes of priority instructions) makes it impossible to give a complete guarantee.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Fifteenth and Twenty Fifth Reports from the Select Committee on National Expenditure*, Session 1940-1941 (London, 1941).

<sup>2</sup> *Twenty Fifth Report from the Select Committee on National Expenditure*, Session 1940-1941 (London, 1941), p. 9.

The machinery for temporary transference is virtually the same as that for more permanent transference. When a worker is surplus to immediate requirements in any plant, either he himself or his trade union representative or the management brings the case to the notice of the local employment exchange or the Inspector of Labour Supply for the area, with a view to making arrangements for utilising the worker's services more fully. If it is suggested that the worker be transferred from one scheduled undertaking to another carried on by the same employer or group of companies, the transfer is generally arranged unless there is some reason for considering that it would not be in the national interest. When an employer asks permission to lend the services of a worker to a different employer, the Inspector of Labour Supply or the exchange is supposed first to make sure that the worker himself is willing to transfer temporarily. If the latter agrees, and if the work is clearly of national importance, the transfer is facilitated, as a rule. This holds true as well where an employer scheduled under the Essential Work Orders asks permission to extend the loan of the worker's services beyond the 14 days allowed in case of emergency without the permission of a National Service Officer.

These arrangements have been made known to the local offices of the Ministry of Labour, the regional representatives of the Supply Departments, and employers. "This should ensure", the Government's Statement on Production declared, "that employers will notify temporary labour surpluses; in view of the difficulties which would arise in enforcing an instruction to employers to notify temporary surpluses of labour, it is not proposed, in the meantime, to make such notification compulsory."<sup>1</sup> In practice, there is still relatively little temporary transference. It is not only difficult to organise because of employers' and workers' resistance but it is not often the best way of overcoming production bottlenecks. Temporary transfers have been found useful, however, in overcoming certain types of emergency bottlenecks—in situations where, for example, a pooling of effort on labouring jobs was required or in certain types of packing and warehousing work.

Finally, trade unions have frequently encouraged the extension of arrangements for temporary transference in order to avoid unnecessary dilution of skilled labour. For example, an area district committee of the Joint Industrial Council for the printing industry circularised all managements and locals in the area, urging them to accept the following suggestions: (a) employers should be willing to transfer temporarily, even for short periods, such labour as can be spared to trade union offices in need of such workers; and

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

(b) workers should be willing to accept, and should even volunteer to accept, such temporary transfer, even though this entails inconvenience. The circular adds that particulars of the amount of overtime worked are to be collected from each establishment, and that where no overtime is being worked, it is to be assumed that such transfers can be made easily. Transfers will not be made, however, to avoid normal overtime, but "to give aid where aid is needed and to ease excessive overtime". Payment to men transferred temporarily will be in accordance with national agreements, and all men temporarily transferred must return to their employer "without any breach of honour or good faith". The *Typographical Circular*, in reporting this action, stated: "We heartily commend the suggestions . . . to other branches. It is not much use complaining about the introduction of dilutees unless members are prepared—even at some personal inconvenience—to put themselves out to keep our industry going and to meet the legitimate requirements of employers."<sup>1</sup>

## THE OPERATION OF THE APPEALS MACHINERY

### (a) *Local Appeal Boards*

Appeals against the directions and decisions of National Service Officers under Regulation 58A and under the Essential Work Orders are dealt with by local appeal boards which have been set up in each main employment exchange area. The primary purpose of the boards is to examine the statements made in appeal applications with a view to determining whether acceptance of the decision of the National Service Officers would work undue hardship on the individual affected.

Each board consists of three persons—an independent chairman (usually a lawyer), and one employers' and one trade union representative. The boards were set up through the local employment committees of the employment exchanges and their personnel was drawn almost wholly from the existing pre-war courts of referees under the unemployment insurance scheme. The chairmen of the boards do not vary, as a rule, and are paid for each sitting, while the other two members are chosen for each sitting from panels of employers' and workers' representatives and serve in an unpaid capacity.<sup>2</sup> Each board sits as often as necessary, and the proceedings are very informal. Evidence, taken by the chairman, is oral and is supposed to supplement the facts given on the application

<sup>1</sup> *Typographical Circular*, October 1941, p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> The board has no paid staff apart from one clerk who handles the documents relating to the cases.

form by the worker, his employer and the National Service Officer. The National Service Officer has the right to attend to present his case and other witnesses may be called. Each case is dealt with separately, and a board may spend anywhere from five minutes to an hour in considering its special difficulties. After the case has been heard, the applicant leaves and the board discusses and decides upon its recommendation.<sup>1</sup>

The appeal boards have power only to make recommendations to the National Service Officers. The final decision lies with these officers. In practice, however, the recommendations of the boards are never rejected unless they are absolutely contrary to national policy. If a National Service Officer disagrees with the conclusions of a board, he will generally refer the case to the regional office of the Ministry of Labour for advice; while difficult cases of principle may be sent on to the headquarters of the Ministry. If in a particular case the recommendation of the board is considered to be seriously at fault, the Ministry of Labour may ask for a rehearing.

The fact that the final power of decision lies with the National Service Officers has given rise to some complaint. It has been suggested that there should be an umpire whose decision would be final, as under the unemployment insurance procedure. The Ministry of Labour considers, however, that it has not proved to be unfair to leave the final decision with the National Service Officers; that these officers can, because of their work, take a wider view than any of the appeal boards; and that comparison of the administrative procedure of this appeals machinery with the statutory appeal right under unemployment insurance is apt to be misleading.

In the cases where the boards have not made the recommendations considered by the National Service Officers to be correct, the main difficulty has been that the boards have not confined themselves, as they are supposed to do, to examining the personal circumstances of the individual worker in order to decide whether special hardship would be inflicted in carrying out the National Service Officer's directions. Rather, they have attempted to delve into the relative priority of the two different jobs in question as well as to examine the personal circumstances involved. Thus, the National Service Officers have often had to ask for rehearings and to urge the boards to keep within their competence, leaving it to the employment exchanges to decide whether a worker's present job is more important than that to which he is being asked

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<sup>1</sup> If the three members of the board cannot agree, the board makes its recommendations by a majority vote, the dissident having the opportunity to hand in his opinion to the National Service Officer.

to transfer. In addition, some effort has been made to educate the chairmen to their functions. They have been sent, for example, a series of principles to use as a guide in the boards' proceedings. If the boards consistently go outside their sphere of action, however, the final method of control lies only in a greater readiness on the part of National Service Officers to reject their recommendations.

The fact that the boards were hurriedly set up by drawing on the existing unemployment insurance machinery has had the disadvantage that the membership of the boards has not always been the most suitable for performing the very different work involved in hearing appeals against directions of National Service Officers. The chairmen, in particular, who occupy an extremely important position, have in some cases not been able to adapt themselves to the new type of work. Various suggestions have been put forward as to the category of persons best qualified to act as chairmen for these appeal boards, but so far it has been impossible to reach any decision. Neither the trade unions nor the employers are satisfied that their representatives on the panels from whom the board members are chosen are truly representative of employers' and workers' interests in the cases brought before the boards. Moreover, some are not interested in the work, while others cannot devote adequate time to it. Modifications in the personnel of the boards are therefore under consideration to the end that the boards may be more competent to deal with the special problems involved in appeals work.

#### (b) *Military Service (Hardship) Committees*

Men and women conscripted under the National Service Acts may appeal to the Minister of Labour for a certificate of postponement of liability to service on the ground that exceptional hardship would occur if they were called for service. This is a statutory right; and the appeal may be granted by the Minister of Labour but otherwise it must be referred to a Military Service (Hardship) Committee. These Committees are made up of the chairmen of the courts of referees under the Unemployment Insurance Acts and two other members, generally chosen from the panels of employers' and workers' representatives for the courts of referees.

Applications for postponement of national service on hardship grounds fall into three main groups: (a) domestic circumstances; (b) business responsibilities and interests; and (c) other cases where exceptional hardship might arise (e.g. students). Application forms

are obtained from the employment exchanges and are filled out by inserting all the relevant facts supporting the applicant's request for postponement. In general, the applicant must prove that exceptional hardship would be caused to other people; his own hardship (inconvenience or financial loss, for example) is not the major consideration.<sup>1</sup> The Committee may grant a postponement certificate for a period of not more than six months, after which the certificate may, if necessary, be renewed for a further period not exceeding six months.<sup>2</sup>

There is a limited right of appeal from the Committee's decision to the umpire appointed under the unemployment insurance scheme. If the decision of the Committee is unanimous and no special point of principle is involved, there is no further appeal unless the Committee permits it. Otherwise, the applicant may appeal to the umpire, whose decision is final. The Ministry of Labour may appeal to the umpire in all cases where the Committee refuses postponement.

The composition of the Hardship Committees is very much the same, and often exactly the same, as that of local appeal boards. Sometimes the same people sit first as an appeal board and then as a Hardship Committee. The Committees' proceedings are also conducted along the same lines as are those of the appeal boards. The work of the Hardship Committees differs from that of the appeal boards, however, in several respects—for example, in the grounds on which postponement may be granted and in the fact that the right of final decision lies with an independent umpire rather than with a National Service Officer.

### THE USE OF DIRECTIONS AND PROSECUTION

The transfer of millions of people to other industries and to other parts of the country has been effected with surprisingly little direct compulsion and with a remarkably small volume of complaints. The Government's use of its wide powers has been cautious but increasingly firm. The Minister of Labour justified a gradual approach to the problem at the end of 1941 stating:

In May, 1940 . . . powers were passed to direct people, and I decided to exercise these powers with discretion. There has been an enormous amount of criticism that I have not directed people hither and thither, but it is just as easy to upset an industry by direction as to fill it by direction. Therefore the

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<sup>1</sup> An application for postponement cannot be made by a person's employer.

<sup>2</sup> So far as possible, the period is limited to the time in which the applicant might reasonably be expected to make alternative arrangements which would remove the cause for exceptional hardship.



problem of selection and transference has to be handled with care, and you have to know when you are handling it the new contracts that are coming out and the districts they are going to, and see that you do not upset the whole business.<sup>1</sup>

During 1941, the use of written directions and prosecution for failure to conform to directions were extremely rare. From the beginning of the war up to the end of 1941, only 146 men, 5 women and 14 firms had been prosecuted for infringement of the directions of the Ministry of Labour under the Defence Regulations. The fact of prosecution is no measure of the amount of direct and indirect pressure used, of course; but the infrequent necessity for using it as a last resort indicates both the breadth of the field of action possible through persuasion and the unwillingness of the Ministry of Labour to use prosecution to secure compliance with its wishes.

The year 1942 began with a shortage of manpower which threatened to become more and more acute. The Government, forecasting a great decrease in the number of male workers (skilled and unskilled) left for industry, emphasised the need for economy in the use of manpower and for speeding the concentration of labour resources on vital war work. Since the basic measures for transferring workers to war employment had been tested by experience gained during 1941, the Ministry of Labour and National Service was prepared to give a stronger lead, where necessary, to hasten results and to cut out the delays inevitable in the initial stages of all schemes involving widespread redistribution of resources. During 1942, therefore, there has been a gradual but marked tightening up in the use of written directions and prosecution. For one thing, the supply of potentially mobile workers was nearing exhaustion; and for another, the National Service Officers, who had tended at first to take the line of least resistance, had gained confidence by experience, and, backed up by headquarters, were more willing to enforce their decisions by written directions and to submit cases of non-compliance for prosecution.

At present, written directions are very common. In fact, they are often preferred by the workers, who consider that the directions clarify their position by giving them something concrete to show to their employers or their families as proof that they must go to other work. Prosecution is likewise being used to an increasing extent, although still on a relatively small scale. Up to the end of 1942, the number of persons prosecuted for non-compliance with the directions of the Ministry of Labour was 4,160—3,801 male workers, 323 female workers and 36 employers. In one month, May 1942,

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 4 December 1941, cols. 1349-50.

DIRECTIONS ISSUED BY NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICERS UNDER REGULATION 58A (1) OF THE DEFENCE (GENERAL) REGULATIONS  
(OTHER THAN DIRECTIONS ISSUED UNDER ESSENTIAL WORK ORDERS), MAY 1942

Industries to which persons were directed to work	Consequent to registration under the Registration Order or one of the Industrial Registration Orders						Other						Totals						Women dealt with under the National Service Acts (not included in previous columns)					
	To remain in present, or return to immediately previous employment						To proceed to new employment (other than immediately previous employment)						Totals											
	Issued to			Dis-obeyed by			Issued to			Dis-obeyed by			Issued to			Dis-obeyed by								
	M	F		M	F		M	F		M	F		M	F		M	F							
Agriculture Building and civil engineering Engineering Merchant navy <sup>1</sup> Shipbuilding and repairing Other industries (excluding coalmining)	5	2		4	1		9	—		4	—		40	1		8	—		54	3		1	297	—
	154	—		7	—		53	—		8	—		1,059	—		59	—		1,266	—		13	25	—
	134	188		2	20		48	6		10	3		352	90		45	5		534	284		28	3,568	—
	13	—		2	—		—	—		—	—		12	—		1	—		25	—		—	—	—
	8	—		—	—		8	—		—	—		78	—		2	—		94	—		2	—	—
	47	166		4	27		72	51		8	19		365	68		18	18		484	285		64	2,575	31
Totals	361	356		19	48		190	57		30	22		1,906	159		133	23		2,457	572		93	6,453	56
Coalmining	514	1		40	—		95	—		10	—		265	—		5	—		874	1		55	19	—

<sup>1</sup>Excluding directions issued by other Government Department Officers appointed to be N.S.O's.  
Source: Ministry of Labour and National Service, Man Power Statistics and Intelligence Branch, July 1942.

3,904 directions were issued by the Ministry of Labour and National Service for all industries (exclusive of an additional 6,472 directions issued to women conscripted for industry under the National Service Acts), and in the same month there were only 79 prosecutions of workers for failure to comply with the directions issued.

Penalties imposed on workers who are convicted of disobedience to the directions of the Ministry of Labour have been growing heavier. Up to the end of 1941, the penalties imposed were fines in all cases, most of them nominal. By June 1942, the fines were considerably larger, ranging from about 10s. to £30 with the majority somewhere between £5 and £10, as a rule. From the beginning of the war up to the end of June 1942, 346 persons (all workers) were sent to jail for non-compliance with instructions of the Ministry of Labour. Jail sentences now range from one month or less to three months.

The preceding table shows, by industry, the number of written directions issued to men and women by National Service Officers of the Ministry of Labour and National Service and the number of directions disobeyed during May 1942.

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#### **IV. SOCIAL PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH LABOUR TRANSFERENCE**

The Minister of Labour and National Service has often emphasised that the "psychological character of the British people" has had to be mobilised. He told the House of Commons on 9 December 1941: "You have to handle people very carefully, and particularly when they are British". So far as labour transference is concerned, there is an ingrained immobility among British workers which has no exact counterpart among most other workers, and which has tended to slow down the tempo of transference. However, many limitations on the mobility of British workers derive from less intangible industrial and social causes which can to a large extent be removed. Lower wages, bad living conditions, inadequate feeding facilities, and poor welfare arrangements, both inside and outside the factory, added to the insecurity of leaving one employment or area for work of a temporary character in another, are all factors which limit mobility.

While the Government was rather slow to recognise the weight of these and other such factors in increasing individual immobility, it has now (largely at the behest of the trade union movement) accepted the principle that everything possible must be done to ensure that conditions of life and of work for transferred war workers are satisfactory. The Essential Work Orders are part of a national effort to bring income and conditions of work up to a certain standard. Arrangements for food, lodging, external welfare, and for covering extra living expenses caused by transfer, are part of an effort to bring conditions of daily life up to a minimum standard of comfort. Consideration being given to problems connected with the post-war employment of transferred workers is part of an effort to take away the inevitable feeling of insecurity for the future. In timing, these arrangements have had a tendency to fall behind the actual need for transference. This lag has not only constituted an obstacle to carrying out needed transfers of workers, but it has also given rise to discontent among transferred workers who have felt that it was hardly too much to ask, when they had responded willingly to the call for war workers, that the Government and the employers should make a serious effort to assist in finding solutions for their special problems.

## FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

(a) *Wages*

One of the most important factors limiting wartime labour mobility has been the financial loss frequently involved in transfer from one job to another and from one area to another. While in some cases wages have undoubtedly constituted an incentive to transfers to munitions work, in many others wages paid for the war work to which workers were being sent or urged to go have been lower than those which they were receiving in their present jobs or have not altogether compensated for the additional expenses entailed by the proposed change of work. The Government, with a zealous regard for collective bargaining, has been extremely reluctant to intervene in the process of wage fixing; and it has consequently been unable to take any strong initiative in removing the wage barriers to transference to essential work.

For many workers in the less essential trades, an intervening period of training or retraining is necessary before the flow of labour from non-essential to essential work can take place smoothly. The allowances paid to munitions trainees during the first year and a half of war, however, were not conducive to the voluntary enlistment of large numbers of persons in training courses. Despite an increase in the training allowances in June 1940, the training centres were not filled to capacity in January 1941, nor was there a sufficient amount of training being given by employers in their own establishments at this time—a month when the Government was announcing an urgent need for 1,000,000 additional munitions workers. *The Economist* (London), pointing out that training was “only just emerging from the state of being regarded as a species of redemption for the hopelessly unemployed”, emphasised that the allowances granted to men and women undergoing training were contrived “to make training, though essential for the war effort, clearly less remunerative than work, however, non-essential”. It added that both the terms of entry and the conditions of training were a deterrent to entering the centres and that the workers regarded the centres as only a last resort, “while those engaged on non-essential work never think of them at all”.<sup>1</sup> In order to eliminate these drawbacks to effective use of the training centres as agencies of labour transference, the Government changed the principle and the rate of payment of trainees in March 1941, stating: “It is desired that the payment made to men and women taking training under the Government Training Scheme should be broadly equivalent to what they would have received had they gone directly into productive industry”. Thus, trainees of 19 years of age and

<sup>1</sup> *The Economist*, 7 December 1940, pp. 694-695, and 25 January 1941, p. 100.

over are now regarded as being under a contract of service and are paid a weekly wage broadly equivalent to that received by new entrants into the engineering industry. During the training course tests are held, normally at monthly intervals, which, when passed, entail wage increases corresponding to advances received by a new entrant into the industry over a similar period.<sup>1</sup> In 1942, the amount of the wage paid to trainees was increased once more, with a view to encouraging a more complete use of the training schemes. In addition, a scheme for paying temporary maintenance allowances to boys aged 16 to 18 inclusive who leave home to take employment in engineering and shipbuilding was put into effect in May 1942. Its object is to facilitate the employment in these industries of transferred youths from areas where there are no opportunities for them to enter skilled employment. All these efforts, although hardly sufficient to bring training wages up to a level where they constitute an effective incentive to train for war work, have been made as a result of recognition from experience that income during training must be adequate to encourage persons to enter it.

Increasing the attractiveness of training relative to non-essential industry solves only one problem, however. The principle governing transference in Great Britain is that the rate for the job shall be paid. The Government has accepted and enforced this principle in respect of the persons transferred by the Ministry of Labour from non-essential to essential work. But the uniform application of this principle, while solving some problems, raises several additional questions. In the first place within an industry, such as the engineering industry, there are all kinds of wage variations in the framework of the union agreements which fix the rate for the job. "Very wide wage differentials have arisen as between one establishment and another in the same district, as well as between one district and another", the Amalgamated Engineering Union pointed out in its *Monthly Journal*. "What about workers earning such differential wages in one place who may be directed to work at another place on a lower scale of payment?"<sup>2</sup> This

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Labour and National Service, release of 17 March 1941.

<sup>2</sup> *A.E.U. Monthly Journal*, March 1941, p. 62. During the discussions at the 1941 Trades Union Congress, it was pointed out that the acceptance of the rate for the job caused dissatisfaction to a worker from the London area forced to transfer to an area, such as the Clyde, where he received a lower rate, and that there was no way of increasing his rate because the Ministry of Labour insisted that he be paid the appropriate rate for the job in the district to which he was transferred. However, when an employer needed more workers to staff his factory, he made proposals to the Engineering Union and to the Confederation of Employers offering a dispersal bonus, which would make up the London worker's rate when he leaves London for another area. The delegate who put forward the case against uniform application of the rate for the job concluded: "... If it is good enough for the engineering employers to offer a dispersal bonus, it is good enough all round that when a man is transferred he should receive wages and allowances commensurate to keep him and his family respectable". (*Report of the Proceedings, op. cit.*, pp. 277-278.)

matter was not covered by any of the provisions of the Essential Work Order; but in discussing the Order, the General Council of the Trades Union Congress asked the Minister of Labour to insert a provision that a transferred worker should receive the more favourable rate, whether that of his old or new district. Its Report to the Congress states:

The Minister considered that it was impossible to make a general provision of this kind and the General Council, recalling that a scheme for war munition volunteers operating during the last war did in fact provide that a volunteer transferred to another district was paid at the higher of the rates operative in the two districts, recorded their regret that the Minister had been unable to accept the principle of the most favourable rate as suggested by the T.U.C.<sup>1</sup>

Although the Minister of Labour was reluctant to interfere with the process of wage negotiation through collective bargaining, joint discussions in some industries have led to agreement on reducing disparities in basic wage rates or on preventing transferred workers from suffering from the disparities. In the engineering industry, for example, the Amalgamated Engineering Union has insisted that the rate of the transferred man must be "the rate of the job from which he has been transferred or that of the job to which he has been transferred, whichever is the higher".<sup>2</sup> This principle, finally conceded by the engineering employers, serves as a basis for the transference of skilled men from one job to another within the engineering industry, and has removed an important obstacle to the mobility of skilled labour.

The following agreement, made between the Engineering and Allied Employers' National Federation and the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, illustrates the application of the principle<sup>3</sup>:

#### WAR TIME CONDITIONS RELATING TO THE TRANSFERENCE OF WORKERS

(28 October 1941)

##### *Rates of Wages*

It is hereby mutually agreed that in cases in which workers are required by an employer as a matter of war time expediency to transfer from one district to work for the same employer in another district due to dispersal of the establishment, or the transfer of workers to a new establishment, either on instructions from a Government Department or otherwise, the following provisions shall be observed:

(1) The rate to be paid shall be the district rate in respect of the particular class of worker in the district to which the worker is transferred.

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Proceedings, op. cit.*, Report of the General Council, Section 116.

<sup>2</sup> *A.E.U. Monthly Journal*, May 1941, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> UNITED PATTERNMAKERS ASSOCIATION: *Monthly Trade Report*, October 1941, p. 8 (text of agreement).

(2) A worker transferred to a district in which the recognised rate for his class is lower than in the district from which he is transferred shall, in addition to the rate referred to, receive from the employer a "Dispersal Bonus" equal to the difference between the rates in the two districts.

(3) The Dispersal Bonus shall be subject to the recognised additions in respect of overtime, nightshift, Sunday and holiday allowances.

(4) Individual merit rates where previously paid shall continue to be paid in addition to the Dispersal Bonus.

A note appended to the agreement by the Secretary of the Employers' Federation reads as follows:

The Federation undertakes to instruct its members:

(a) in the case of workpeople transferred compulsorily to another district by the Ministry of Labour, or transferred by mutual arrangement among the Labour Supply Officials, the management and the workpeople concerned, the principles of this Agreement apply.

(b) in the case of men transferred from non-federated firms or from other industries who are not paid on a basis recognised between the Federation and the Engineering Trade Unions, the principle applies that a man moving to a lower paid district be paid a "transfer bonus" which will give him the rate of the district he leaves in respect of the occupation in question.

The Amalgamated Engineering Union, which has been working with about 30 different district rates (varying by as much as 30s.), is now engaged in negotiating a national basic rate. If this rate should be established, it would undoubtedly constitute a forward step in solving the wage problems involved in labour transference in the engineering industry. If the Engineering and Allied Employers' National Federation refuses to agree to a uniform national basic rate, the union will demand the grading or classifying of cities and towns so as to reduce the number of district rates in existence.

When the transfer has involved moving from the jurisdiction of one union to that of another, however, it has often meant serious financial loss to the workers involved. In such circumstances, the wage structure has not offered inducement to transfer but has often militated decisively against it even where the greater value of the other work for war purposes was obvious. For example, the wages of coalminers, shipyard workers, dock labourers and agricultural workers have not been high in relation to the wages offered in munitions factories and in some other work not as essential to the prosecution of the war. The rates of wages in those industries made it very difficult to get back shipyard workers, dock labourers and coalminers, and to overcome the shortage of agricultural labour. In April 1941, the Minister of Labour told the House of Commons that 49,000 men had responded to his appeal for workers who had



formerly been engaged in shipbuilding. Forced out of the industry during the past 15 years, most of them, after a long stretch of unemployment, had found good jobs. "I have now to take them out of those jobs", he said, "and put them back into the shipyards. Some are going back with two pounds, three pounds, or five pounds a week less than they are now getting. No word of praise has been given to them. These men say to me: 'I have a weekly income now. Am I to go back to the Tyne or the Clyde to-morrow to find that somebody has forgotten to send the materials, and then I shall go to the employment exchange? Am I to have no security?' We have no right to ask them to accept the position".<sup>1</sup> Similarly the appeal to coalminers to return to the industry nearly foundered on the rocks of low wages and insecurity of weekly income. The Mine Workers' Federation has told the Government quite frankly that there is little chance of men returning willingly to the pits while wages and conditions offered elsewhere are so much more attractive.

Moreover, if a man was refused the right to seek higher wages through the operation of the Restriction on Engagement Order and was compelled to remain with his former employer, who requested that he should be refused other employment in the industry because he was indispensable in his present employment, the worker was often, as the Select Committee on National Expenditure pointed out, a "disgruntled and an unwilling worker".<sup>2</sup>

For all these reasons, therefore, the principles of the Essential Work Orders have gradually been extended over the industrial structure.<sup>3</sup> These condition the admission of undertakings to the benefits of the Orders on the observance of a Fair Wages Clause and on the maintenance of standard conditions of employment. In factories scheduled under the Orders, special provisions guarantee to the workers concerned a minimum income from their employment—a guaranteed week (for time workers) or a guaranteed day (for piece workers)—partly in order to encourage the return to these industries of suitable workers in the numbers required. These provisions do not affect any terms or conditions of employment more favourable to any workers; and the wages guaranteed by them are payable even if the employer has temporarily no work for them, so long as the latter are capable of and available

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 12 April 1941.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 5, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> The Essential Work (General Provisions) Order, S.R. & O. 1941, No. 302, as amended by S.R. & O. 1941, No. 1051, and superseded by S.R. & O. 1942, No. 371 and No. 583. Special Orders have been made to meet the requirements of particular industries (for example, building and civil engineering, dock labour, merchant navy, shipbuilding and ship-repairing, and agriculture in Scotland). By June 1942, nearly 7,000,000 workers were covered by the Essential Work Orders.

for and willing to do any work, other than their usual work, which they can reasonably be asked to do when their usual work is not available.

The Essential Work Orders thus provided a floor below which wages and conditions of employment could not fall and enforced the rate-for-the-job principle. However, other difficulties of transfer have arisen from the fact that employers have paid more than the agreed district rates. The Select Committee on National Expenditure reported in May 1941 that:

The efforts to draw the best men into aircraft construction inevitably took the form of offering attractive wages. This has had a number of bad effects. It has tended to upset wage rates and the normal movement of labour within the engineering industry generally. It has also tended to break down collective control and direction of the industry, and has weakened authority . . . The Sub-Committee have no quarrel with high wages as such. Men are working long hours, in most cases 60 hours or more a week. When the money is well earned as a result of skill and energy, the firm which pays those wages obtains as a result of them high production. But they have had evidence of firms in the aircraft industry deliberately paying their operatives more than the agreed district rates and, by so doing, disturbing other firms in that district. The Sub-Committee are not referring here to the payment of small "merit" advances in particular cases, but to a general practice of overpayment throughout a factory. They have heard of a case where a firm, which was paying these excessive wages, wished to transfer to another firm, which observed the proper rates, some skilled workers surplus to their own requirements. They had great difficulty in effecting this most desirable transfer because the men were unwilling to accept the substantial drop in earnings which would be entailed. This is a state of affairs which the Sub-Committee deplore, and they urge most strongly that the Ministry of Aircraft Production should do everything in their power to ensure that factories working for them, either commercially or on a management fee basis, observe the Federation rate and keep their bonus percentages in line with those of their neighbours.<sup>1</sup>

In order to counteract the danger of a labour standstill owing to such practices, National Service Officers and Inspectors of Labour Supply have been instructed to watch for misuse of skills and experience, and to arrange for transferring all workers whose capacities are not used to the full in their present employment. However, in the absence of a national policy for fixing bonuses and piece rates in the engineering and other war industries, the problem of "over-payment" has not been wholly solved.

In addition to the application and gradual extension of the Essential Work Orders, the most effective progress in overcoming wage barriers to transference is being made through joint conferences of employers and workers (sometimes convened at the initiative of the Government) at which efforts are made to raise the wages

<sup>1</sup> *Fifteenth Report from the Select Committee on National Expenditure*, Session 1940-1941, London, 1941, pp. 6-7,

in particular essential industries. The cotton industry, for example, was faced with an acute shortage of labour in 1942, owing to the vagaries of the war. Thousands of former cotton operatives, transferred to munitions work in earlier stages of the war, now have to be brought back to the industry. In the process of re-transfer, they stand to lose, on an average, about 15s. per week. Thus, in directing women workers back to the mills an effort has been made to gear up the obsolete wage structure of the industry. An agreement has been reached which provides that if the shortage of doffers in the industry is made good by directing back to the mills from munitions work women or girls over 19 years of age, they may combine both ring spinning and doffing and thus obtain earnings more comparable with those which they have been receiving in munitions factories. The text of this agreement, made between the Master Spinners' Federation and the Cardroom Amalgamation at a joint meeting on 5 June 1942, is as follows:

#### RING SPINNERS AND DOFFERS

It is agreed that as a principle there shall be no embargo on ring spinners performing the duty of doffing, provided the circumstances of the mill and the nature of the work warrant such practice.

The nature of the duties to be performed and the remuneration to be paid shall be the subject of agreement between the individual firm, the workpeople and the local trade union official.

In reaching any settlement, due regard should be paid to the requirements of the war situation and a mutual spirit of goodwill.

In the coalmining industry as well, efforts to transfer former miners back to the pits have been linked with negotiations to raise wages in the industry from their low level relative to other essential industries. Sustained pressure from the Mineworkers' Federation succeeded in making the whole question of wages in the industry a major issue in the discussion on the reorganisation of the industry in mid-1942; and as a result of the Federation's efforts, wages for coalminers have been increased.

This type of action to bring wages in particular war industries or occupations to a level comparing favourably with those paid in other industries and occupations is largely dependent upon the process of collective bargaining. Progress has therefore often been slow and uncertain. But in the absence of any more satisfactory method of reducing or abolishing marked wage differentials among essential industries, the Government is forced to rely on the joint action of employers and workers to bring the wage structure in their industries into line with the needs of the war economy. The disadvantages of this method are obvious. The advantages, although

less readily apparent, are real, since it is flexible and can be varied from one industry to another and since it is based on the principles of collective bargaining and collaboration which are at the core of the country's industrial effort.

### (b) *Allowances*

Transfer to another job always has to be considered by a worker in relation to the extra costs involved—such as rehousing or lodging, travelling expenses, and loss of wages while transferring. At first, it was not fully realised how substantial were these subtractions from wages. The Government was therefore rather slow to accept the responsibility for paying the extra costs incurred by transfer, except for a few categories of workers whose skills were exceptionally scarce (such as dockers and shipyard workers). Moreover, the trade union movement was not in favour of wholesale Government subsidisation of travelling and other expenses involved in changes of employment; it considered that most such matters could best be dealt with by the employers and unions concerned. The employers, for their part, tended to oppose the payment of these expenses, largely on the ground that any such action would constitute a dangerous precedent for the post-war period. Later in the war, when workers began to be transferred in larger numbers, by compulsion (failing agreement), and often to jobs with lower wages, the Government was forced to take more positive action, applicable to all transferred workers. The main purpose of the Government's policy is to facilitate transference; the "means test" has therefore not been imposed as a condition for the receipt of wartime allowances granted to transferred war workers.

#### (1) *Travelling Allowances.*

In the early stages of the war, the Government did not pay travelling allowances to workers asked to transfer from one area to another. In many industries, it was the usual practice for an employer or a trade union, or both, to pay some or all of these expenses; and after the outbreak of hostilities, the Government proposed that employers should make it a general practice to pay fares and allowances for travelling time to transferred workers. Nevertheless, the Government agreed to cover these costs for transferred workers in the industries in which it particularly wished to encourage mobility (for example, for dock workers).

When the need for more general and more extensive transference began to arise, the Ministry of Labour made arrangements for paying travelling expenses and allowances to workers trans-

ferred by an employment exchange or by a trade union approved for this purpose. At present, if a worker is transferred to undertake work of national importance in an area beyond reasonable daily travelling distance from his home, the Ministry of Labour will pay the fare for the initial journey to the place of work to which the worker is transferred, and will also pay the sum of 5s. for travelling time during the journey if it takes less than four hours, or 10s. if it takes more than four hours.<sup>1</sup> If there is a definite loss of wages as a result of the journey, the Ministry may give the man or woman the actual amount lost above 10s. up to a maximum of £1 per day. The worker receives the free travelling warrant from the employment exchange in his home area, and the payment for travelling time from the exchange in his new place of work.<sup>2</sup> The Government does not pay travelling costs where it is the practice, by custom or agreement, for these payments to be made by the employer. Where the employer is accustomed to pay fares but does not pay for travelling time, allowances for travelling time may be paid by the Ministry. If the employer moves the man in the course of his business operations, the employer is responsible for paying fares and allowances. The cardinal principle determining whether the Ministry of Labour or the employer (including Government departments) should make these payments is that whoever moves the worker is responsible for paying his expenses.

In the building and civil engineering industry, the following arrangements to cover travelling expenses and time, incorporated in the Uniformity Agreement, have been made for workers on jobs covered by this Agreement<sup>3</sup>:

(a) Free daily travelling facilities (by vouchers or otherwise) shall be provided as between convenient centres at or near the job and convenient centres in the area between 4 and 25 miles of the job.

(b) Each man sent to the job beyond 25 miles shall be refunded his travelling fare from the place of his recruitment to the job (nearest railway station in each case) at the commencement of his employment on the job; and at the end of his employment on the job shall receive a railway ticket from the job back to the place of recruitment. Provided that a man who within three weeks discharges himself voluntarily shall not be entitled either to this railway ticket or to the payment for travelling time in the case of men sent from beyond 50 miles as provided in (c).

(c) In the case of men sent from beyond 50 miles, time travelling to the job at commencement and time in returning from the job at completion shall be paid for at plain time rates. When in such cases a man has been employed under the terms of the Agreement for a period of 8 weeks, either on one job over 50

<sup>1</sup> This allowance is 3s. and 7s. for a worker under 16.

<sup>2</sup> If the worker says that he needs money for the journey, he may draw one-half of his travelling allowance from the exchange in his home area.

<sup>3</sup> Building and Civil Engineering Industries: *Uniformity Agreement*, 1940 (Incorporating the Amendments made 22 October 1940 and 14 August 1941).

miles from his place of recruitment or on a number of such jobs by transfers, he shall be entitled to a free railway ticket to the place of original recruitment and, upon return to the job to resume work, shall be refunded his fare to the job. This arrangement shall apply also at the end of each subsequent 8-week period of such service.

(d) In respect of each day on which a man travels to the job he shall receive an allowance for travelling time in accordance with the following scale<sup>1</sup>:

From an agreed convenient centre over 10 miles and up to and including 15 miles from the job—travelling time allowance equivalent to  $\frac{1}{2}$ -hour's pay per day, at the appropriate plain time rate.

From an agreed convenient centre over 15 miles and up to and including 25 miles from the job—travelling time allowance equivalent to  $\frac{3}{4}$ -hour's pay per day, at the appropriate plain time rate.

From over 25 miles from the job—travelling time allowance equivalent to 1 hour's pay per day, at the appropriate plain time rate.

The Ministry of Labour does not provide assistance towards the daily travelling expenses of workers to and from their jobs, except in the case of trainees.<sup>2</sup> "While the Government grant certain allowances in respect of workers who are transferred", the Minister of Labour stated in the House of Commons on 15 May 1941, "the question of daily travelling is left, as it has always been, to be determined by negotiation between the workpeople and their employers, through the normal negotiating machinery of the industry. A system of Government grants for daily travelling, which would have to be general in its scope, would create more difficulties than it would remove . . . It is impossible for the Minister of Labour to undertake to pay, through his Department, excess travelling allowances. It is administratively impossible to adjust. The arrangement has been to allow it to be negotiated either with the Government Department, where a Government Department is the employer, or in collective agreement, where it can be defined and arranged, through the employers, and made applicable to the circumstances of each industry."<sup>3</sup> The trade unions, for their part, felt that the matter should be handled by the unions and employers concerned, and a number of unions have

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<sup>1</sup> It is stated that (d) shall not be considered to cancel or over-ride (c), "which shall continue to operate, provided always that no man shall receive, in respect of the same day, both the allowance provided in this rule (d) and also the allowance provided in Working Rule 6 (c)."

<sup>2</sup> The Ministry pays all the daily travelling expenses in excess of 5s. per week to all boarder trainees over 21 years of age, and to all trainees over 19 years of age living at home and in Government training centres.

<sup>3</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 15 May 1941, cols. 1236-1237. The Ministry of Labour apparently undertook the responsibility of paying excess daily fares for a certain period. It was found, however, that no effective check could be made by the local employment exchange on the payments and the practice was discontinued.

arranged for the payment by the employers of excessive daily travelling expenses to their transferred members.<sup>1</sup>

It is still the general practice in industry for workers to pay their own daily travelling expenses, the chief exception being in the building and civil engineering trades, in which the employer pays all or part of the cost of travelling to the job. But in order to meet the special problems of Government factories, a scheme of assisted daily travel was introduced in late 1941.<sup>2</sup> Under this scheme, all travelling expenses in excess of 3s. per week are paid by the employing Government department in the case of new factories, or older factories which have been expanded, situated in remote areas where there is a shortage of local labour or accommodation, and in the case of dispersed factories where, owing to dispersal, the workers have to travel considerably further than before. The scheme can be applied, at the discretion of the departments, to private firms in engineering and allied industries engaged on Government work, if they fall into one of the above categories. It is not now intended, however, to go beyond this scheme and to require all departments to pay, wherever necessary, all fares in excess of 3s. a week to workers at any establishments engaged in Government work, as had been recommended by the Select Committee on National Expenditure.<sup>3</sup> This is not entirely because of the administrative difficulties involved. The employers are not generally anxious that workers should obtain a grant for daily travel because they fear that a demand for a similar grant might be made after the war and that wartime practice would be cited as a precedent. This is the main reason why the assisted daily travel scheme now in force has been confined to new (or almost new) war factories in remote areas. It is also the main reason why the Ministry of Labour, with its scrupulous regard for industrial agreements, has so far refused to accept responsibility for administering the scheme but has left it to the Supply Departments.

The difficulties of the present arrangement are illustrated by the experience of a Cardiff firm. This firm employed a large number of workers from surrounding villages who travelled 20 miles or more to work each day at great expense. The trade union claimed that the assisted travel scheme should be applied to the workers. The employer refused on the ground that it would be a dangerous precedent. The firm was a contractor with the Ministry of Supply, and, in reply to the workers, the Ministry said that the firm was

<sup>1</sup> See *Report of the Proceedings at the Seventy-Third Annual Trades Union Congress*, Edinburgh, September 1941, Report of the General Council, p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> After discussion with the Engineering and Allied Employers' Federation.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, *Twenty First Report*, Session 1940-1941, p. 20, and *Twenty Fifth Report*, Session 1940-1941, p. 19.

neither new nor in a remote area and therefore could not be admitted to the scheme. The union appealed to the National Arbitration Tribunal. The Tribunal decided that the only authority which could apply the scheme was the Ministry of Supply and that, since the Ministry was not a party to the proceedings, the Tribunal could not make any decision binding upon it. The firm decided (a) to rearrange the shifts so that the workers could earn more and (b) not to employ workers who had to travel such a long distance that they would have to pay more than 6s. per week for travelling. The situation now is that the firm needs about 1,000 women workers. These women could be found in the villages in the area but they wish to travel home at night. The firm refuses to pay their expenses and the Ministry of Supply refuses to extend the assisted travel scheme. The Ministry of Labour is in the somewhat weak position of refusing to take responsibility for subsidising daily travel but pressing for the relaxation of the existing scheme.

In some cases, the assisted daily travel scheme is said to encourage long daily travelling, thereby fatiguing the workers unnecessarily. There have been several outstanding instances where workers were travelling as many as three hours each day to and from their work and considerable hostel accommodation near the factory went unused. Consequently, it has been urged that the scheme should be modified so as to encourage workers to live in hostels or lodgings near their work. The Ministry of Supply, for example, could refuse to continue to pay any excess for travelling to women able to live in a hostel near their work; but it has shrunk from taking such action because it is hardly in a position to enforce residence in hostels.

Finally, it may be mentioned that workers can claim relief on their income tax up to a maximum of £10 per year if their travelling expenses have been increased as a result of the war. How much saving this means to any particular worker depends on the rate of tax for which he is liable.

## (2) *Lodging Allowances.*

Under arrangements first introduced in June 1940, the Ministry of Labour pays lodging allowances to all transferred workers who continue to maintain a home in the place from which they have been transferred. The allowances are payable to married workers and to single workers (both men and women) with family responsibilities. They are paid by the Ministry of Labour on condition that the employers to whom the workers are transferred do not pay lodging or similar allowances under customary practice or industrial agreement. If the worker is moved by the Ministry, the latter



pays his lodging allowances and continues to do so for as long as the worker stays where he was sent by the Ministry or is sent elsewhere by the Ministry. If the employer moves the worker in the course of his business operations or recruits him directly, the Ministry is not responsible for paying the lodging allowances. With the introduction of the Government scheme of lodging allowances, the payment by employers of out-working allowances has become less and less frequent.<sup>1</sup>

The lodging allowance paid by the Ministry of Labour is at a fixed rate of 3s. 6d. per night (including Sunday). It is payable only where the new place of work is beyond reasonable daily travelling distance<sup>2</sup> from the worker's home and on condition that the worker can satisfy the Ministry that he is entitled to an allowance. Since the basic principle of the allowance policy is that it should facilitate transference, the test of eligibility is the simple practical question whether the worker's expenses have been increased because of the fact of his or her transfer. The key is the worker's position at the moment of transfer. The allowance is not conditional on need, although the Ministry does, in some cases, have to investigate family means. It has to be satisfied, for example, that the man has a dependant, whether others contribute to the family budget, and if so who is the chief support of the family, since only one person in a family is entitled to a lodging allowance. This type of investigation of means really arises only with single men with family responsibilities, since married men have a clear legal liability.<sup>3</sup> As a general rule, single men must contribute not less than 20s. per week before they are considered to have "family responsibilities". A man who is otherwise eligible to receive the allowance is entitled to a lodging allowance even if his wife is employed, and *vice versa*. Moreover, in certain circumstances, the allowances may

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<sup>1</sup> A good many industries had some form of out-working allowances in pre-war days which have been carried over into the war period. In the general engineering industry, for example, if an employer moves a worker, the latter is entitled to an out-working allowance of 5s. per night. In the building and civil engineering contracting industries, the following rule (incorporated in the Uniformity Agreement) applies, provided that the Ministry of Labour conditions have been fulfilled, whether men are transferred by an employment exchange or from another job under the same employer:

Proper lodging and expenses shall be allowed and paid for by the employer to all men sent on to jobs necessitating lodging, at the rate of 3s. 6d. for each night away from home in accordance with rule, except where, owing to special circumstances, the sum is found to be inadequate, in which eventuality application may be made to the Local Joint Committee for a special rate to be fixed.

<sup>2</sup> The definition of "reasonable daily travelling distance" varies from one part of the country to another in accordance with transport arrangements and other factors.

<sup>3</sup> If a worker is divorced or living apart from his family and transferred, he is not normally entitled to a lodging allowance. If, however, he has kept a home and has some of his family living with him, his expenses are increased and he is entitled to an allowance.

continue to be paid after a worker's dependants have moved from the home area and gone to live with friends or been billeted in another area.

Lodging allowances are generally paid on Friday for the pay-week ending the previous Wednesday. The standard method of paying the allowance is for the worker to collect it in cash at the nearest local office of the Ministry of Labour. Special arrangements have been made, however, to cover remote sites and large undertakings. Either two paying officers of the Ministry go to the factory or site and pay the allowances to the workers or the employer himself pays the allowances, on behalf of the Ministry of Labour, to the eligible men employed at his factory. The many large employers who find it convenient to use the latter method (since the visit of paying officers is apt to interrupt production) merely check the day-to-day eligibility of the workers and put the amount of the weekly allowance in the workers' pay envelope each week.<sup>1</sup>

Altogether, about 100,000 lodging allowances are being paid by the Ministry each month. The system operates smoothly, on the whole. There has been some trouble because workers who transferred before June 1940 are not entitled to the allowance and those of them who work side by side with workers transferred after June 1940, and therefore in receipt of the allowance, naturally feel aggrieved. The Ministry of Labour has said that it is not possible, for a variety of reasons, to extend the scheme to all workers who transferred voluntarily before June 1940; but this decision is being reconsidered. Other complaints have centred on the present adequacy of the fixed rate, 3s. 6d. per night. This sum was originally fixed because it was the standard rate in the building and civil engineering industries and, at that stage of the war, national effort was focussed on moving men in these industries from one place to another. The General Council of the Trades Union Congress has been making efforts to have the normal amount of the lodging allowance increased to 5s. a night, the amount of the out-working allowance paid by employers in the general engineering industry. The Ministry of Labour urged the Council not to press the demand, however, for these reasons. First, there was already a certain amount of bad feeling between workers transferred before June 1940 and not in receipt of the allowance and workers compulsorily transferred after that date and in receipt of the allowance. Secondly, the volume of complaints pertaining to the insufficiency of the existing allowance was small. Thirdly, there was no guarantee that any increases given would not be absorbed by higher charges

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<sup>1</sup> If absent from work without leave, the men are not entitled to the allowance. The employer therefore has to check the men's attendance record.

made by landlords. Finally, an increase in the allowance would tend to raise the general cost of living. The workers are not wholly satisfied that these arguments are strong enough to keep the allowance at its present level.

### (3) *Settling-in Grants and Loans.*

During the first week in the new place of work, any war worker transferred by the Ministry of Labour may obtain a grant of money (anything up to a maximum of 24s. 6d.) from the employment exchange to meet initial expenses and any special difficulties that may arise. For women only, a further grant of 10s. may be made during the second week of employment.<sup>1</sup> These grants are paid only to workers who are not eligible to receive a lodging allowance from the Ministry.

In addition, all transferred workers may borrow money (up to £1) from the employment exchange.<sup>2</sup> The loan is supposed to be repaid in full out of the wages from the first week of employment; but there has been a time-lag in repayment and also a considerable deficiency in collection. The number of workers who have requested loans from the employment exchanges has been declining as the war goes on, largely because fewer and fewer workers moved by the Ministry have been unemployed before their transfer.

If the worker wishes his family to come and live in the new area and if the employment exchange agrees that the family should come, he may apply to the exchange for a household removal grant, to help in moving his family and furniture. The exchange, after the application has been approved, gives advice as to the method of moving his belongings and pays the cost of moving and the travelling expenses of all the members of his immediate family. In addition, if he moves to an unfurnished house or apartment, the exchange may make a small additional grant (a flat sum of £2) to cover the incidental expenses of moving. These grants are not conditional on need and there is no fixed maximum. The Ministry of Labour pays the net cost of the removal direct to the moving contractor.<sup>3</sup> Removal grants are made not only to manual workers but also to clerical staff and "blackcoated" workers and even to

<sup>1</sup> This is confined to women workers because their wages are lower than those of men and they are less likely to have any margin for meeting their initial difficulties.

<sup>2</sup> This is often necessary because employers hold up the workers' wages for a week.

<sup>3</sup> The employment exchange generally gets several estimates of the cost of moving the household belongings and agrees to pay the lowest reasonable price. If the worker wants to send his goods by road because of the risk of damage by train (which is cheaper), the exchange will pay the train cost and let him pay the difference himself.

executive and managerial staff. There is, however, a rough discretionary limit fixed in practice. If a person is earning over £500 per year, the exchange may not admit his claim for a removal grant. Since the beginning of the scheme for assisted moving, over 10,000 household removal grants have been made. The average cost of the removals was approximately £20 for manual workers and about £25 to £30 for "blackcoated" workers.

#### (4) *Continuing Liability Allowances.*

Despite these arrangements, a transferred worker still has to bear extra expenses for such things as taxes, mortgages, and furniture liabilities connected with his home in the former district of work. In March 1941, therefore, a Continuing Liability Allowance was introduced, largely in response to complaints against the rule that lodging allowances payable by the Ministry ceased when a transferred worker was joined by his family in the area to which he was transferred. The scheme is, briefly, as follows:

(1) The allowance takes the form of payment towards the continuing liability in respect of the house in the old area or, in certain cases, towards the cost of storage (of furniture, for example).

(2) The allowance cannot exceed 24s. 6d. per week, *i.e.*, the normal amount of the lodging allowance.

(3) Its payment is dependent upon proof that all reasonable steps have been taken by the worker to terminate his continuing liabilities.

(4) The liability to be taken into account in determining the allowance is:

- (a) Where the house is rented, the actual weekly payments to be met by the tenant in respect of rent and taxes.
- (b) Where the house is being purchased by a mortgage, the interest on the capital sum, ground rent and taxes, but not repayments on capital.<sup>1</sup>
- (c) In the case of property owned by the worker, allowance for the equivalent of rent based on the tax value of the house.
- (d) The worker is obliged to secure all possible reduction in the liability if the house is damaged by enemy action.
- (e) He is required to produce evidence from time to time that the liability continues to exist.

(5) The allowance is not normally payable to workers who have received a household removal grant.<sup>2</sup>

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The following table gives a few details concerning the number and amount of the various allowances paid by the Ministry of Labour and National Service to transferred war workers during three months of 1942:

<sup>1</sup> The Building Societies have agreed to give sympathetic consideration to cases where the continuance of capital payments would result in hardship.

<sup>2</sup> This restriction has given rise to considerable hardship in particular cases.

## 120 WARTIME TRANSFERENCE OF LABOUR IN GREAT BRITAIN

### PARTICULARS OF ALLOWANCES PAID TO TRANSFERRED WORKERS DURING FEBRUARY, MARCH AND APRIL 1942

Class of allowance	February	March	April
Number of free travelling war- rants issued during month to enable workers to com- mence work in other areas	14,093	19,439	16,877
Number of authorised applica- tions for lodging allowances current at end of month	100,102	105,528	110,826
Total amount paid during month as lodging allowances and travelling time	£447,669	£479,730	£510,072
Household removals during month:			
Number of accounts paid	499	618	645
Amount paid	£5,066	£6,574	£6,399
Total amount paid as cash clothing allowances and emergency payments (grant- ed in exceptional cases)	£414	£463	£504
Settling-in grants (including supplementary grants) paid during month:			
Number of grants paid	11,979	13,843	15,099
Amount paid	£11,634	£13,808	£14,918
Authorised applications for continuing liability allow- ances current at end of month:			
Number of applications	2,305	2,326	2,342
Amount paid	£5,190	£5,372	£5,249

### GENERAL WELFARE ARRANGEMENTS

The Ministry of Labour and National Service soon found that a good deal of labour turnover and discontent among transferred war workers was due to bad living conditions in the new place of work as well as to poor working conditions within the factory. It began to be appreciated, therefore, that action to improve these conditions was not a luxury which could not be afforded in wartime but was instead an integral part of labour redistribution policy. Some of what has been done has been built on past services of the Ministries of Labour and of Health; but much of it is new and had to be improvised and developed in difficult circumstances.

Outside welfare activity has now been made a function of the na-

tional, regional and local organisation of the Ministry of Labour and National Service. At the headquarters of the Ministry of Labour, there is a central Welfare Department responsible for the formulation of policy and for supervision of welfare work throughout the country. A Factory and Welfare Advisory Board (composed of representatives of employers, trade unions and voluntary organisations, and officials of the Ministry of Labour) has been established; it meets once a month and is supposed to advise on all welfare problems, both within and without the factory. In each of the 11 administrative regions of the Ministry of Labour, a Regional Welfare Officer has been appointed on the staff of the Regional Controller to take charge of workers' welfare outside the factories and, in particular, to supervise such things as the housing, feeding, transport, recreation and health arrangements for transferred workers. Moreover, nearly 100 local welfare officers have been appointed to deal with matters of this kind on a local basis.<sup>1</sup> Although these officers work closely with the local employment exchanges and generally have their offices in the exchange premises, they report directly to the Regional Welfare Officer of their region.

The primary function of all these officers is to discover defects in the arrangements made for war workers, to bring them to the notice of the proper authority, and to get remedial action taken as quickly as possible. Now that some of the most immediate problems have been met, their work is being extended to include the more positive function of anticipating welfare requirements over the whole field of the war economy. Much of the activity of the Ministry of Labour in carrying out these functions consists in persuading and stimulating other agencies of the Government to look after war workers; very little of its work is done directly. It works through the Ministry of Health on some matters, the Ministry of Food on others, the Ministry of Supply on others, the Ministry of Aircraft Production on still others, etc. The Ministry of Labour also co-ordinates the work of voluntary organisations which in many areas play an important part in making certain kinds of arrangements for transferred workers. There is a Central Consultative Council, representative of the voluntary organisations interested in welfare questions, which advises the Minister of Labour on welfare questions and acts as liaison between the Ministry and local voluntary organisations.

Inside the factories, the Minister of Labour has continuously emphasised the need for a central personnel office and for trained

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<sup>1</sup> The great majority of these officers are at work in the Midlands and Lancashire areas where the intake of labour is tremendous and continuous.

welfare supervisors (both men and women), so that, when a worker is transferred to a new factory, he or she will not leave merely because of the absence of arrangements on the part of the management to initiate him or her into the new job and to work out the personal problems that inevitably arise in an unfamiliar factory or on an unfamiliar job or both. The factory inspector may, in any war factory, order that doctors, nurses and welfare workers shall be available where their services are likely to be required. It is significant, also, that the Essential Work Orders require the Minister of Labour to see to it that satisfactory provision for workers' welfare exists before he schedules any undertaking, thus entitling it to the benefits granted by the Orders. Finally, because of the shortage of persons trained in welfare and personnel work, the Ministry of Labour inaugurated a training course for welfare supervisors and industrial nurses, in which several hundreds of people have been trained. These aspects of welfare activity are not, however, so specially related to the particular problems of transferred workers as is the external welfare work of the Ministry; and they are therefore not covered in the present report in any detail.

The Minister of Labour has often stressed the value of the welfare machinery in making transference a success from the workers' standpoint; and he has expressed his satisfaction with the operation of the machinery set in motion.<sup>1</sup> On the whole, tremendous progress has been made, under difficult conditions, in a field in which there had been little Government intervention of any kind before the war. It is true that the character and effectiveness of welfare arrangements vary from one place to another. In some places, the recreation facilities may be backward; in other places, the lodging and billeting accommodation may be giving rise to difficulties. In general, however, the complaints which arise are dealt with and most of the welfare officers have now a thorough grasp of their work and are therefore able to take more positive action to prevent grievances.

The fact that the welfare officers of the Ministry of Labour work through other Ministries and organisations instead of dealing directly with individual cases and problems has often slowed down action to remove the grounds for complaint. So long as the existing administrative arrangements are considered to be a practical necessity, the immediate solution probably lies more in cutting the red tape of Government negotiation to a minimum than in any

<sup>1</sup> "I have one of the most effective welfare organisations that has ever been established in any State", he said. "While there are bound to be complaints and irritations in transferring people about the country I am satisfied that the steps I have taken to look after these people are adequate." *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 29 January 1942, col. 893.

radical alteration of the responsibilities of the various Ministries on welfare questions. Other difficulties arise from the fact that the demarcation between Government activity and industry activity is changing in the welfare field just as it is in all other fields. It is sometimes not clear to the welfare officers of the Ministry, on the one hand, and labour officers of the munitions factories, on the other, just where their responsibilities begin and end. The result is that in some places there has been a good deal of confusion. These problems were inevitable, however, and are being overcome gradually. The general lines of welfare policy have now been mapped out and emphasis is being placed on improving the standards of execution in all parts of the country.

#### (a) *Transit and Reception Arrangements*

Once it is decided that a worker should be transferred to another place of work, the employment exchange must make all the necessary arrangements for the journey. This task is complicated by the fact that many of the women workers being transferred are not only new to industrial work but have never before travelled away from home. If the worker is travelling alone or with one or two others, the employment exchange in the home area provides full instructions as to the times of the trains, any changes which have to be made, and the address of the employment exchange in the new place of work. Each worker is also given a leaflet (*Going Away on War Work*) which gives advice about what to take, contains information concerning the payment of fares and allowances for the journey, and explains the arrangements that will be made for lodgings and meals, for care in case of illness, and for recreation in the new workplace. Generally, the workers are met at the station in the new place of work by a reception officer; and then taken to the factory or to the lodgings assigned to them.<sup>1</sup> If they cannot be met, the station master is given information to help them to find their way either to the employment exchange or to their lodgings.

When large groups of workers are travelling from one place to another, special arrangements are made to ensure that the trip goes smoothly. An official of the Ministry of Labour, called a "convoy officer", accompanies the group all the way from the home area to the new workplace. The number of cases where groups

<sup>1</sup> The employment exchange in the worker's home town informs the employment exchange in the receiving town of the number of workers who are transferring and the times at which they are travelling and will arrive. The reception officer, with a Ministry of Labour arm band, can usually identify the workers by distinctive baggage labels provided for them by the Ministry.



are convoyed from one place to another is small for the country as a whole, but regular convoys of women workers have been leaving Scotland for the Midlands and the Northern Region for the North-West Region. From Scotland, for example, there are three parties per week. The women from various parts of Scotland collect at a central point in Glasgow, arriving there in the late afternoon, in time to catch an evening train. They are met at Glasgow by reception officers who help them with their luggage, show them to their reserved places in the train, introduce them to one another, talk to their mothers so that the latter feel comfortable about their daughters' trip, and so forth. The convoy officer goes on the train with them and the train is met, at Birmingham, by other reception officers, who see that refreshment is provided and then take the women to the exchange, to the factory, to their lodgings or to a reception hostel.

The reception arrangements vary considerably from one community to another. In some places, the employing firm sends a labour officer to the station, who meets the reception officer of the Ministry of Labour and takes all subsequent responsibility for the girls assigned to his or her firm. Although the Ministry encourages employers to take this initiative, it cannot compel them to do so; and in many places the Ministry itself transports the workers to the factories where they are to work, introduces them to the management and takes them to their lodgings. Reception hostels have been established in a number of centres to accommodate workers who arrive late at night or who, for one reason or another, cannot be placed immediately in lodgings or in a residential hostel. There are about 50 of these reception hostels altogether, set up and financed by the Ministry of Labour but managed by a voluntary organisation or the local authority concerned.<sup>1</sup>

It is the duty of the reception officers at the new place of work to help the transferred workers with their personal arrangements—for example, changing the address on their identity cards or obtaining their new ration books. If a large number of workers arrive together, all these matters can be dealt with speedily. In Preston, for instance, an excellent system is in force. The workers are taken to the employment exchange by a chartered bus; a representative of the local food office comes to the exchange to deal with the workers' ration books; the National Registration official is present to deal with their identity cards; gas masks are examined; and a representative of the employing firm is often there as well. A

<sup>1</sup> The charge for a night's lodging is low—2s. 6d. for the room, 1s. for supper and 1s. for breakfast. If a worker cannot pay this charge, he or she can sign a form authorising the employment exchange to deduct the sum from the settling-in allowance paid the worker by the exchange.

settling-in allowance is drawn at the exchange, and the workers are then taken, in the bus, to their lodgings.

(b) *Accommodation*

One of the greatest and most persistent difficulties is that of finding sufficient and satisfactory places for war workers to live. "The factories were built", the Minister of Labour complained, "but somebody forgot to provide places in which the workers could live near to the factories." Moreover, some branches of war industry tended to concentrate and to expand in already overcrowded urban areas. The more transference has been necessary, the more serious the problem of accommodation has become. In some instances, essential work has been temporarily delayed because of a lack of proper housing.

So far as possible, transferred war workers are accommodated as lodgers in private houses on a voluntary basis. This system has the advantages of being economical from the Government's standpoint and of making use of housing already in existence. The Ministry of Health is primarily responsible for the provision of accommodation; and the Ministry of Labour works largely through the regional health officers and local authorities in securing housing for transferred workers. The Ministry of Health asks the local authorities to compile lists of householders willing to take in lodgers, and these lists are given to the local employment exchange. In some areas, however, where the intake of labour is large and continuing, the local authorities have had to set up a special billeting organisation with a lodging bureau to provide accommodation for war workers. As a rule, the employment exchange warns the billeting officer of the numbers of new workers expected and the date of their arrival; and the billeting officer, in consultation with the exchange, assigns lodgings to them. Workers accommodated in this way have their morning and evening meals in their lodgings in almost all cases. Since the arrangement is on a voluntary basis, there is no standard charge to the worker for this type of lodging. In some areas, the local authorities have fixed a charge which they advise landladies to ask (22s. 6d. or 25s. per week for women and 27s. or 30s. per week for men); but they have no power to force the landlady to accept this amount and no power to force the transferred worker to pay it. They merely recommend the amount to both householders and workers as a reasonable charge.

The possibilities of billeting transferred workers on the voluntary principle have been widened by publicity campaigns undertaken in difficult areas by the Ministry of Labour and National

Service. These campaigns emphasise the importance of the contribution to the war effort being made by householders who lodge war workers. A leaflet of advice for making war workers comfortable was prepared and distributed to families accommodating transferred workers. In selected difficult areas, added incentive to take in munitions workers is given by declaring that householders with family responsibilities who agree to provide war workers with meals and lodging will be regarded as performing vital war work and therefore not available for other work or service.

Most transferred war workers are thus provided with lodgings on a voluntary basis, and this has proved to be by far the most satisfactory arrangement. In some areas, however, it has been impossible to find enough voluntary accommodation; and if this is so, compulsory billeting powers are conferred by the Ministry of Health on local authorities. Such powers have been granted in about 150 areas. In a number of these areas, the powers have not had to be used but remain as a threat in the background. On the other hand, in some areas where compulsory powers have been used, the result has been that little further effort has been made to explore the possibilities of voluntary billeting. In particularly difficult areas the Ministry of Health, at the request of the Ministry of Labour, may issue a lodging restriction order to apply to a specified area. Such an order has the effect of reserving accommodation in that area for war workers, soldiers or civil servants. First introduced at the time of the raids of 1940-41, the orders are still useful to prevent industrial areas from being flooded by holiday crowds or self-evacuees. Some 15 areas are covered by orders of this kind; but only a few of these orders were issued specifically to reserve space for industrial war workers.

When a compulsory billeting notice is served on a householder, the latter is required to provide the war worker with "shelter, access to water and sanitary conveniences". For this, there is a fixed charge of 5s. per week. This sum is drawn by the householder from the post office, deducted by the employer from the worker's wages, and, after passing through several Government accounts, is reimbursed to the post office. In most cases, the landlady agrees voluntarily to provide a morning and evening meal, the cost of which is not fixed but is determined by the bargaining of the householder and the war worker.

The compulsory provision of meals for war workers and the fixing of a standard "all-in" rate (bed, breakfast and supper) has often been considered but has finally been decided to be impractical. The standards vary so much from one household to another and the methods of control over standards are so unsatisfactory that it has

been thought best to let war workers strike their own bargains. There have been many complaints about billeting arrangements, but relatively few of the difficulties appear to be due to over-charging; most of them relate rather to the lack of provision for meals or access to cooking facilities and service. It is true that there is a fixed billeting rate for soldiers and civil servants. In general, however, they are accommodated in boarding houses where the landladies are used to lodgers or in larger buildings. Transferred war workers, on the other hand, are lodged in most cases with working-class families, a number of which have never taken in boarders. A great many billeting difficulties have their origin in the fact that the landladies are not used to lodgers and the workers are not accustomed to living in billets. There has to be considerable give and take on both sides and it is not strange that problems of adjustment should have arisen.

British experience in billeting war workers in private homes has emphasised, first, the value of reaching both the war worker and the householder by propaganda, of rousing public consciousness to the desirability of making war workers comfortable, and of ensuring that both sides have a clear idea of fair and reasonable charges for the services provided. Secondly, voluntary billeting has always been more satisfactory than compulsory billeting; and even where compulsory powers have been granted, continuing efforts should be made to exploit to the full the possibilities of voluntary billeting. Thirdly, although the desirability of keeping charges at a reasonable level had been clearly recognised, the administrative difficulties of fixing and enforcing an inclusive rate are very great and the general opinion is that the worker gets better treatment by making his own arrangements with the landlady—so long as both parties to the agreement have full information as to what constitutes a "reasonable" rate. Finally, there is a clear need for machinery for dealing with complaints from lodgers and landladies; a good deal of friction could be avoided if grievances could be aired and if both workers and householders knew that someone was responsible for dealing with any complaints that may arise.<sup>1</sup>

Although billeting in private homes is the principal source of accommodation for transferred workers, even the use of compulsory billeting powers does not make it possible to find sufficient accommodation in some areas. Moreover, many large war factories are located at too great a distance from any suitable accommodation. Gradually, therefore, it became necessary to build special residential

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<sup>1</sup> There are Billeting Tribunals under the Defence Regulations but they deal with objections of householders to having people billeted on them rather than with miscellaneous grievances.

hostels for war workers. The first hostels were set up by the Supply Departments. Before a decision is taken to build an industrial hostel, the Supply Department concerned consults the Ministries of Labour and Health in order to make sure that, in view of the inflow of labour and the accommodation available, the construction of a hostel is necessary. To manage the hostels, the Ministry of Labour has created a National Service Hostels Corporation, a non-profit-making organisation financed by the Ministry of Labour, which remains generally responsible for the policy of the Corporation in running the hostels.<sup>1</sup>

Industrial hostels have been set up both for men and for women and now have a total capacity of about 108,000 beds. The cost of living in them is fixed by the Ministry of Labour at a uniform rate throughout the country. The present charge for bed, service, and a morning, evening and "snack" meal is 27s. 6d. for men and 22s. 6d. for women. The normal unit capacity of a hostel is 500 or 1,000 (although one accommodates as many as 2,000). All the hostels are constructed on the basis of a uniform plan approved by all the departments concerned and the Ministry of Labour. The standard lay-out of a hostel, built of one-story bungalow type buildings, consists of a central block (known as the welfare or social block) which includes the kitchens, canteens, assembly hall, library, theatre, games and reading and writing rooms, and, around the central block, the sleeping units, which are built in blocks of cubicles containing either one or two beds and washing facilities.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to hostels, quarters have been built for married workers—generally small houses of light construction with the minimum number of rooms. These quarters were, in the main, built for key workers and their families. They now provide accommodation for about 7,000 married persons. In view of the need for strict economy in building materials and labour, however, no further married quarters are to be constructed.

The industrial hostels have been found to be a practical form of housing both in remote areas and in crowded urban areas where available accommodation is exhausted (Coventry, for example). On the whole, the hostels are well run and remarkably comfortable. Their popularity is very largely a matter of personal preference. Where lodgings in private homes and hostel accommodation are

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<sup>1</sup> The Ministry of Supply, however, continues to operate the royal ordnance factory hostels.

<sup>2</sup> Of the hostels now being built, 90 per cent. are being built with 2-bed cubicles and 10 per cent. with 1-bed cubicles: It was found that women on the whole preferred the 2-bed cubicles and men the single cubicles. In regard to washing facilities, the first hostels had one central room; now each cubicle will have hot and cold water. Moreover, each block of sleeping cubicles will have its own common room.

both available, the worker is free to choose where he or she wishes to live. Hostels are found noisy by some workers and they do not hold much appeal for the non-gregarious; other workers find them cheerful and companionable places in which to live.

The Government is trying to encourage war workers to live in hostels or lodgings rather than to travel long distances each day, and with this in mind, is considering some modification of the existing arrangements for subsidising daily travel expenses.<sup>1</sup> Partly for financial reasons and partly for personal reasons, however, most workers prefer to live at home (if this is at all possible) even if it entails long daily travelling. Further effort is being made to make the hostels attractive places for living; this is thought to be a far better way of inducing workers to stay in them than coercive measures such as failing to grant or cutting off daily travelling allowances.

The Government has accepted the general principle that workers transferred from the same district should be accommodated, so far as possible, in the same hostel or near one another in the neighbourhood where they are sent to work. This principle was endorsed by the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, which recommended that workers from the same area should be lodged near together.<sup>2</sup> It has also been arranged that the addresses of hostels shall be furnished to the General Council in order that information may be forwarded to the unions concerned and to the Trades Council in the area, so that the transferred workers in the hostels can keep in close touch with the trade union movement.

### (c) *Food Arrangements*

Most transferred workers get two meals a day at their lodgings and the other meal at the factory canteen; and all workers in hostels get their meals at the hostel and the factory. The main task of the Ministry of Labour has therefore been to arrange, through the Ministry of Food, for the provision of British Restaurants in cases where compulsorily billeted workers have no place to eat their morning and evening meals. These Restaurants are set up by the local authorities, which can claim 100 per cent. reimbursement on the capital cost. About 1,200 of these Restaurants are in operation. Although most of them do not cater directly for transferred workers, they may all be used by these workers and several were established specifically to meet the problems of workers living away from home.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 115, above.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Proceedings, op. cit.*, Report of the General Council, Section 133, p. 152.

The Ministry of Labour has recently been making fairly vigorous efforts to encourage the development of adequate meal facilities, either in lodgings or British Restaurants. It has now declared, for example, that women war workers will not be directed into employment in any factory unless they can get their meals at their lodgings or within a 5-minute walk from their lodgings. In some important industrial areas, however, there is still a marked shortage of conveniently located places for war workers to eat.

The development of canteen facilities in the factories is not a matter affecting transferred workers only, but it has a direct effect on their welfare. The Minister of Labour and National Service, faced with the urgent necessity of pushing war production to a maximum during the summer of 1940, found that the lack of adequate canteen arrangements was one of the factors that was impeding satisfactory transference. Later, he described a visit to the Liverpool docks, saying: "There was no canteen, there was no food, there was nothing. Cannot the employers realise that the men are as human as they are, that they have feelings and the same right to proper treatment?"<sup>1</sup> He also told the House of Commons that he had met with resistance in attempting to introduce proper canteen arrangements on the ground that "it was a Ministry of Labour fad".

During 1941, however, considerable progress was made in providing canteens for workers in war industries, as well as in other arrangements for transferred workers to get meals without difficulty. The Minister of Labour and National Service made three Orders authorising the Chief Inspector of Factories to require the provision of suitable canteen facilities in any factory in which more than 250 people are employed and in which war or Government work is being carried on, in docks and on the site of a building operation or work of engineering construction undertaken for the Government. Moreover, the owners of mines and quarries may be required to provide canteens (for one mine or quarry or for a group) where suitable food may be purchased.<sup>2</sup> The procedure for establishing canteens has been rather by consultation and agreement than by compulsion, however. By August 1941, legal directions for the establishment of canteens had been given only in the case of about 150 factories and shipyards, 25 building sites and 10 dock authori-

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 2 April 1941, col. 1088.

<sup>2</sup> The Factories (Canteen) Order, 1940, dated 11 November 1940, S.R. & O. 1940, No. 1993; Building Operations and Works of Engineering Construction (Welfare and Safety Provisions) Order, 1941, dated 8 January 1941, S.R. & O. 1941, No. 66; The Docks (Provision of Canteens) Order, 1941, S.R. & O. 1941, No. 222; The Mines and Quarries (Canteens) Order, 1941, S.R. & O. 1941, No. 1867.

ties.<sup>1</sup> There were approximately 4,500 canteens in operation at that time, with nearly 1,000 additional canteens in construction. By the end of 1941, canteen facilities were reported to exist at about 85 per cent. of the factories employing 250 workers or more and engaged on Government work and by May 1942, canteens were provided in about 96 per cent. of these factories. In the coalmines there were over 800 canteens catering for 90 per cent. of the total labour force of the industry. In factories employing fewer than 250 persons, however, the provision of feeding facilities is said to be far less adequate. Since it is often impractical, for a variety of reasons, to establish canteens in relatively small factories, the policy of the Government is to encourage the establishment of British Restaurants and other feeding centres for war workers.

#### (d) *Recreation and Entertainment*

The lack of "somewhere to go nights" has been an important welfare problem connected with transferred war workers. The problem has been particularly acute in remote areas where hostels and blocks of married quarters have been set up, in cities and towns where there are no recreational facilities or far too few or where the usual facilities have been discontinued during the war, and for particular groups of workers (such as dockers and building trades workers). It has been nationally recognised, however, that the existence of suitable and adequate recreational facilities helps immeasurably in the adjustment of transferred workers to a completely new environment.

Wherever possible, the Ministry of Labour has tried to avoid setting up special recreation centres for war workers and to ensure that their recreational needs are met through the existing facilities of voluntary organisations such as the YWCA or the YMCA. These organisations have done everything possible to meet the special needs of war workers living away from home. In some important areas, their efforts have been outstandingly successful and the transferred workers have no fault to find with the facilities made available to them in this way. In other areas, the efforts of the voluntary organisations have not been sufficient (through no fault of their own) and many war workers complain of having to sit in uncongenial lodgings night after night. A good many complaints come to the attention of welfare officers of the Ministry of Labour or trade union officials or field workers of the voluntary organisations, and most of them can be remedied in time, at least to some extent.

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<sup>1</sup> Statement by the Minister of Labour and National Service, in *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 7 August 1941, col. 2069.



If special recreational centres are needed, the Ministry of Labour generally calls in the voluntary organisations concerned and asks their help, although the building and operation of the centres may be subsidised by the Government.

Trade unions, in co-operation with the voluntary service organisations, have played a useful role in unearthing the recreational needs in particular localities and in seeing that they are met to the workers' satisfaction—whether the need be for "pub" space or a "snack bar", for a dance hall, for a library or games room or for a common social room. The General Council of the Trades Union Congress has urged all local trade union clubs to open their doors to transferred workers and to develop any special facilities for them that may be necessary; and in many places this is the way in which war workers have been brought into close contact with the trade union movement in their new place of work.

In the residential hostels for war workers, the recreation and entertainment programmes are relatively elaborate. The hostels have good equipment, as a rule (gardens, cinema and stage facilities, dance floors, library and reading and writing rooms, game rooms, cafés, etc.), and are gradually putting it to use. Lecture programmes are planned; musical entertainment is provided; discussion groups are organised; and a variety of activities is provided for workers on each shift.

In addition, recreation is provided for war workers inside the factories in the form of weekly concerts and entertainments given largely by an organisation known as ENSA. These concerts are given in the factory canteens during the lunch hour and are said to be much appreciated by the workers.

For workers in the more isolated areas without a hostel to provide a social centre, for dockers in ports with limited facilities, for building workers on remote sites, and for other special categories of war workers, the recreational problems are more difficult to solve; and relatively little progress has been made in meeting their needs. The importance of finding ways of providing recreation for them is now recognised, but the methods of doing this still remain to be worked out, for the most part.

#### (e) *Special Health Care*

Under special arrangements concluded between the Ministry of Health and District Nursing Associations, transferred war workers who fall sick may use the District Nursing Service. Where necessary, they may be accommodated in the hospitals operating under

the Emergency Hospital scheme of the Ministry of Health.<sup>1</sup> Cost of hospitalisation is based on ability to pay, taking into account any payments the workers may have to make to retain their lodgings. Both the transferred workers and their landlords are given particulars of these arrangements so that they know what to do in the event of sickness.

For workers living in residential hostels, at least one nurse is always available, and a doctor calls at certain specified times during the week and whenever urgently required. Special sick bays have also been built and equipped to care for sick or injured workers.

These arrangements are additional to the health care given to transferred workers, along with all other workers, inside the factories. There has been a striking increase in the medical facilities provided in the factories. The Minister of Labour has the power, under the Factories (Medical and Welfare) Order of July 1940, to require the appointment of medical practitioners and nurses in war factories, but so far persuasion has sufficed and this power has not been used in any case. Although the number of factory doctors and nurses has been greatly expanded during the war, much remains to be done to give adequate health care to war workers, particularly in the smaller factories, and to co-ordinate health services inside the factories with outside health services.

On the whole, the special arrangements made to meet the particular requirements of transferred workers who fall sick have operated without special difficulty. Wherever inadequacy in health care for these workers exists, it seems to be due more to deficiencies in the general arrangements for health care of industrial workers than to inattention to the special needs of transferred war workers.

#### (f) *Educational Facilities*

When the workers' families come to join them, the problem of schools for the children arises. As a general practice, the Ministry of Labour and National Service reports that it is furnished by the other Government departments concerned with information "bearing on the number of children for whom educational provision is likely to be needed as the result of movements of war workers"; and this information is then transmitted to the appropriate local authority. In some areas, temporary school accommodation has been organised. The cost has been borne by the local education authority and the Board of Education in the proportions prescribed by the usual grant regulations. It has been suggested, how-

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<sup>1</sup> The scheme includes the great bulk of the country's general hospital accommodation, excluding only the small or highly specialised hospitals, with a few exceptions.

ever, that, since this cost derives from the compulsory movement of workers to meet national war requirements, the cost ought to be borne by the National Exchequer.<sup>1</sup>

Very few children have been transferred to new homes because of the transfer of their parents on war work. Where this has been done (for example, where married quarters have been provided for key workers), there has been no great difficulty in arranging for the children to take advantage of the educational facilities provided by the local authority concerned.

### (g) *Holidays*

If a transferred worker's family cannot accompany the worker to the new place of work, some arrangements must be made, wherever practicable, for the worker to visit his home at fairly regular intervals. During the summer of 1940 and the heavy raids of 1940-1941, there was little possibility of making any arrangements of this kind. During the latter part of 1941, however, it began to be possible to consider the ways and means whereby the many thousands of war workers who had been transferred away from their homes (most of them for long periods) could visit their families.

As a general principle, this matter has been dealt with in Great Britain by holiday or special provisions in collective agreements. In the building and civil engineering industries, for example, the Uniformity Agreement provides that after a man has been employed under the Agreement for 8 weeks away from his home he becomes entitled to a free railway ticket to his place of original recruitment and back to his job again. "It is not intended that the periodical return home shall be rigidly every 8 weeks", an interpretation of this Rule points out. "The intention is that the break should coincide (as far as convenient) with statutory holidays. The 8-weeks' period is to be regarded as an average".<sup>2</sup>

To supplement arrangements made under agreements, however, the Ministry of Labour and National Service (in consultation with the Ministry of War Transport) decided in the spring of 1942 to introduce a scheme of "assisted travel" for war workers who wished to visit their homes. The scheme applies to all workers transferred to war work by the Ministry of Labour since 1 June 1940, on condition that the worker is not already covered by a generally similar provision in industrial agreement or practice. Each eligible worker

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 11 December 1941, cols. 1676-77.

<sup>2</sup> Building and Civil Engineering Industries: *Uniformity Agreement*. Rulings, Interpretations and Explanations given by Joint Board (London, 1941).

may receive (not more than twice a year) a warrant entitling him (or her) to a railway ticket to his home. Forms for the warrants can be obtained at any local office of the Ministry of Labour and must be returned by the worker seven days before the proposed trip, countersigned by the employer. The worker presents the warrant to the railway ticket office and pays 7s. 6d. for his ticket; and the railway charges the difference between this sum and the total cost of the ticket to the Ministry of Labour. The basic principle of the scheme is equality among the workers affected: each worker pays the same amount no matter what the length of his journey is. The figure of 7s. 6d. was fixed because it corresponds roughly to the fare for a return journey of about 30 miles each way, which would normally be regarded as the limit of daily travelling distance.<sup>1</sup> Because of the need to hold railway travel to the minimum during the winter, the scheme operates only from 18 May to 15 September.

#### TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP OF TRANSFERRED WORKERS

The movement of workers from one job to another has raised a variety of complicated internal problems for the trade union movement as a whole and for each individual trade union. One of these problems is that of the recognition by one trade union of the membership cards of another. Trade unions in the industries subject to concentration, such as the textile industry, have been faced with a tremendous loss of membership. On the other hand, the engineering unions have had a tremendous influx of new members, which has brought up unpleasant memories of the state of the industry after the last war. An individual trade unionist, for his part, has been confronted, in the absence of special arrangements, with double entrance fees and dues as well as with the loss of many of the privileges which he had acquired as a result of membership in his former union.

In order to avoid confusion in the trade union movement and inconvenience and financial loss to transferred workers, many unions have come to agreement among themselves in regard to the mutual recognition of trade union membership cards. The General Council of the Trades Union Congress has made recommendations on the subject, but the conditions on which any one union will accept members have traditionally been a question for that union to decide and not the General Council, which has no jurisdiction whatever in the matter. As yet, therefore, there has not been any

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<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the scheme has the advantage of ruling out subsidisation of small journeys because it prevents the local offices from being worried by applications of workers for assistance in trips which cost less than 7s. 6d.

general recognition of trade union cards and the question is handled through inter-union wartime agreements.

The General Council of the Trades Union Congress issued a statement in 1940, in which it presented the alternatives, namely<sup>1</sup>:

(a) To allow matters to proceed in an unregulated way, except in so far as certain unions might have joint working agreements;

(b) For the General Council to ask unions to observe a uniform principle of joint recognition of the cards of trade unionists coming into shops under their control; or

(c) If necessary, to qualify this arrangement (under (b)) by some *per capita* fee payable to a union willing to recognise the membership cards of another union.

The General Council considered that to leave the question to solve itself would result in endless confusion and jurisdictional conflicts. It pointed out that the uniform principle of general recognition of trade union cards meant that it was necessary to think of trade unionism as a whole, rather than for individual unions to absorb large numbers of members from other unions for whom they would continue to bear responsibility when the war came to an end. In the view of the Council, a mutual recognition of union cards would stabilise the trade unions in non-war industries and enable members to transfer back to their own industries more easily after the war and to regain the rights of full members in their former union.

After consideration, the General Council decided to urge the executives of the various unions to accept the principle of general recognition of union cards. This would mean that each "recognising" union would instruct its officers that, when a trade unionist entered a factory or shop in which that union is established, that member's existing union card would be fully recognised, on the understanding that the member would work under and abide by the agreements and terms negotiated by the "recognising" union with the employer. The "original" union to which the worker belonged, however, would maintain all the services and benefits to which the transferred member is entitled, although it would not be concerned with trade negotiations and would agree to a transferred member's working under the discipline of the "recognising" union. Moreover, when the trade unionist leaves his war work, he would be entitled to full facilities for employment, if available, in his old industry. He would continue to pay his contributions either to his own branch (as previously), or to the nearest branch in the district to which he is transferred, or by post.

<sup>1</sup> *Labour*, August 1940, pp. 570-571.

The General Council stated that wherever possible it would like to see agreement for full recognition of the man's original card in this way. If modifications were absolutely necessary, however, the Council proposed certain special arrangements within the general scheme. Thus, there might be a weekly trade contribution to the "recognising" union for trade negotiations and matters of legal aid arising out of employment, including workmen's compensation claims. If this arrangement were adopted, the General Council would supply to the "recognising" unions a special emergency contribution card for recording the suggested contribution. Alternatively, arrangements might be made between the unions concerned and the General Council as to methods of securing a uniform contribution. The Council recognised that special modifications might have to be made for women workers, whose trade union contributions are often lower than those of men.

The Council submitted this scheme to the unions for their views and expressed the hope that they would be willing to let the scheme operate for a limited period, subject to extension, thus demonstrating "their readiness in a moment of grave national danger to co-ordinate and simplify machinery governing inter-union relations which are of general concern to the movement".

The results of these proposals were presented to the Trades Union Congress held in Edinburgh in September 1941. The final classification of replies at that time was as follows:

- 78 unions (membership 1,966,312) favoured general (free) recognition of trade union cards<sup>1</sup>;
- 22 unions (membership 274,734) favoured recognition subject to a trade contribution or *per capita* fee;
- 17 unions (membership 2,262,431) were generally unfavourable to the proposals of the General Council.

A number of unions had replied that they were not likely to be very much affected by the problem. In some cases, however, they gave general support to the Council's proposals for mutual recognition of cards.

Among the unions that opposed the scheme were a few important unions in the munitions and metal-working industries, including the Amalgamated Engineering Union. The A.E.U. has insisted

<sup>1</sup> A list of the unions which agreed to operate the system of reciprocal free recognition of trade union cards is given in the Report of the General Council to the Trades Union Congress (Section 173). It includes the National Union of Railwaymen, the Engineering and Shipbuilding Draughtsmen, the Pattern-makers' Association, the National Society of Painters, the Typographical Association, the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives, the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, a number of textile and hosiery workers' unions, and a variety of others.

that anyone employed in that industry must become a member of the Union, pay entrance fees, and have a clear trade union card. Members transferred from other industries join what is known as the Temporary Section of the Union and are affected by the general arrangements governing dilution in the engineering industry. The policy of the Union, as described to the 1941 Trades Union Congress, is as follows:

We have never said to any trade unionist coming into the engineering industry "You must drop your card". What we have said is this: "These are jobs which custom and practice, shall we say, have given to members of the A.E.U. If you come into the industry and do these jobs, then you must pay your contribution to this organisation, not only for the work that it is doing on behalf of its own members, but for the work that it is doing for the dilutees that are coming in." The A.E.U. is largely responsible for conditions in the engineering and munitions industry, and all we are asking of the other workers who come into the engineering industry is that they will take up a temporary card of membership in a special section that we have created. We have never said that they must drop their own card. They can continue to be members of their original organisation.<sup>1</sup>

The General Council met in February 1941 with the executive officers of the unions that were unfavourable to its scheme, in order to see whether agreement on some kind of uniform scheme was not possible. The initiative was without success, however. The Report made by the Council to the 1941 Congress stated: "The unions represented were not prepared to modify their policy, and the General Council reluctantly came to the conclusion that further progress along those lines was impossible".<sup>2</sup>

A confidential circular was sent to the unions which had stated that they were in favour of the principle of reciprocal free recognition, giving a list of these unions and advising that they should put the principle into practice among themselves. A further circular was sent to unions that had stated a preference for recognition of cards subject to a trade contribution or *per capita* fee, asking whether they wished to associate themselves with this limited scheme of reciprocal free recognition of cards; and a number of unions replied that they did wish to take part in this scheme.

The following agreement between the National Union of General and Municipal Workers and the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers illustrates the individual arrangements for recognition of union cards made between certain unions and based on the principles put forward by the General Council.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Proceedings, op. cit.*, p. 332.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *The New Dawn*, 19 July 1941, p. 227.

Memorandum of Agreement between the National Union of General and Municipal Workers on the one hand, and the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers on the other, relating to War Emergency Regulations for the mutual recognition of the cards of the members of each Union, wherein

It is Agreed:—

1.—That where a member of one of the Unions signatories to this agreement during the period of the war enters into a factory, workshop, or department in which the other Union is established and holds the working agreements with the Employers, his (or her) existing Trade Union card will be recognised in full on the distinct understanding that he (or she) will in all respects work under and abide by the terms of the agreement negotiated with the Employer by the "Recognising Union".

2.—That such recognition shall continue for the period of such employment during the war, provided that the worker concerned remains a fully paid-up member of his (or her) "Original Union".

3.—That the member's "Original Union" shall be responsible for the maintenance of all services and benefits to which the member is normally entitled, except that the "Original Union" will not be concerned with, or take any part in, trade negotiations.

4.—The "Recognising Union" will continue to be responsible for all negotiations in respect of all the employees in the factory, workshop, or department as the case may be, and the member whose card is recognised will work under the discipline of the "Recognising Union". The Officers of the "Recognising Union" shall exercise complete authority with regard to the conditions under which the worker is employed in the factory, workshop, or department.

5.—That at no time and under no circumstances will the member whose card is recognised by the "Recognising Union" act as a recruiting agent for, or seek to extend the influence of, his "Original Union" in the factory, workshop or department where he (or she) is employed, neither shall he (or she) act in any way prejudicial to the interests of the "Recognising Union".

6.—The worker to whom such recognition is given shall at least once every four weeks produce his (or her) Trade Union membership card to the Shop Steward, local Branch Secretary, or other responsible officer of the "Recognising Union", and satisfy such officer that he (or she) is a fully paid-up member of his (or her) "Original Union".

7.—That this agreement shall be regarded as a temporary War Emergency measure, and shall have effect as from the 12th day of May, 1941, and that any question arising subsequent to the signing of the agreement but not provided for therein shall be the subject of mutual negotiations with a view to reaching a settlement satisfactory to both parties.

Since some of the most important trade unions in munitions work and engineering have not yet agreed to the general plan for the mutual recognition of union cards, but instead continue to lay down unilaterally the conditions governing the admission of new members, the plan of the General Council, as incorporated in inter-union agreements, does not yet cover many workers who have been transferred to more essential work.

The Amalgamated Engineering Union, although maintaining its refusal to participate in the general scheme, has been making



agreements on an individual basis—for example, in connection with the transfer of a number of textile workers to munitions work in a particular district. “We have reached very definite agreement with organisations that are bringing their members into the engineering industry”, one of the A.E.U. delegates told the 1941 Trades Union Congress, “and we are prepared to continue to make agreements with other organisations. . . . But we certainly are not prepared to give up our right to allow a large number of workers in other unions to come in without the A.E.U. having some say in respect of conditions, wages and other matters connected with work for which we shall be responsible.”<sup>1</sup> This reservation, however, does not seem to conflict with the principles of the scheme of the General Council. Moreover, the Edinburgh session of the Trades Union Congress, held in September 1941, adopted, by a vote of 3,399,000 to 1,482,000, a resolution endorsing the policy of the General Council in endeavouring to secure agreement between affiliated unions on the general recognition of membership cards, and continuing:

Congress is of opinion that as the transfer of workers from peace-time to essential war work is a purely temporary measure, those trade unionists so transferred should receive recognition of their trade union card under one of the schemes originally put forward by the General Council, and instructs the Council to take further steps to implement this policy.<sup>2</sup>

Although the Council can only encourage the adoption of its scheme and cannot impose it, a considerable number of new agreements have been made during 1942. It is probable that the scope of these agreements will broaden considerably because the majority of the trade unions are co-operating wholeheartedly to overcome the difficulties involved and tend to stress to an increasing extent the solidarity of the trade union movement as a whole. The agreements which have been made have operated without special difficulty and to the satisfaction of the trade unions concerned.

#### GUARANTEES FOR THE FUTURE EMPLOYMENT OF TRANSFERRED WORKERS

One vexing and as yet unsolved question in Great Britain is that of providing some guarantee of re-employment for workers who are forced to transfer to munitions employment which, by its very nature, is of uncertain duration, or to other employments of importance to the war economy but of little or no importance to a peace economy. On the whole, the issue has been put forward by the workers as one of “reinstatement” in their former employments,

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Proceedings, op. cit.*, p. 332.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 326.

largely because the guarantee offered to persons enlisting in the Armed Forces or called for Civil Defence duties has been reinstatement in their former jobs, if the jobs are still available. No legal guarantee of re-employment has as yet been given to workers transferred by direction of the Ministry of Labour. The Essential Work Orders provide a form of guarantee of stable and continuous employment and wage income; but they contain no guarantee for the future, aside from the fact that the employer may not dismiss any worker without the written permission of a National Service Officer (except for serious misconduct). The trade unions have been seeking some form of guarantee; and the Government has recognised that the lack of a guarantee of future security creates an important obstacle to labour mobility. Meanwhile, reinstatement rights have been included in some collective agreements and in arrangements made by the trade unions with the managements of particular plants.

In the case of a worker who transfers voluntarily to war work for financial gain, little can be done by the Government to provide a guarantee for the future. He has taken a risk and is willing to accept its consequences. In the case of a worker thrown out of employment owing to the concentration of production scheme, curtailment of supplies, or priorities, however, it has been argued that the Government has some responsibility for his future. The dividing line between "voluntary" and "compulsory" transfer to munitions work is increasingly difficult to draw. In the case of a worker who is served with a National Work Notice but who seeks out essential work before receiving a formal direction to transfer, the line is even more tenuous. In the case of a worker directed to transfer to other work, it has been argued, the Government has been forced into a position in which, in all justice, some guarantee of security for the future is necessary for the worker as well as expeditious in facilitating the transference movement.

The position of workers who have been sent National Work Notices has received some consideration in collective agreements. An illustration of how the problem has been worked out is provided by the steps taken by the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers. After having made representations to the Ministry of Labour and National Service, the Union's executive was informed that the Co-operative Movement had agreed to treat National Work Notices "as being equivalent to compulsory directions for the purpose of ensuring that the workers' reinstatement rights (under agreements) should not be prejudiced".<sup>1</sup> However, the absence of general arrangements to cover the future position of "volunteer"

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<sup>1</sup> *The New Dawn*, 25 October 1941, p. 341.

war workers has prevented many workers from leaving their employment and voluntarily going to war work. It was stated by a member of the General Council during the 1941 Trades Union Congress, for example:

Now there is a great difference between suggestion, constraint, and compulsion, and it is quite right that many of our members have felt that not merely was it suggested that they should transfer but they were constrained to transfer, while the chance of taking employment locally was available to them, rather than wait for compulsory direction to go to other parts of the country. But the curious result has been this: that when workers who are engaged in concerns where there is provision for reinstatement after the war, are told by their employers that if they go otherwise than by compulsion they will not be guaranteed reinstatement after the war, it is actually in the interest of the worker who wishes to be assured of his job after the war to wait for compulsion rather than go voluntarily and have the employment entirely terminated. That is a matter which I think merits the attention of the Minister of Labour and National Service, and is a matter which we intended to raise on the Registration for Employment Order at the next meeting of the Consultative Committee.<sup>1</sup>

The position of workers directed or compelled to transfer to war work has been given the most thought. The negotiations entered into by the General Council of the Trades Union Congress on behalf of workers transferred by order of the Ministry of Labour were summarised in the Report of the Council to the Edinburgh Congress in September 1941, as follows:

In September 1940, the question of the reinstatement after the war of compulsorily transferred workers was discussed with the Minister of Labour, and it was pointed out by the General Council that workers who were conscripted to the Armed Forces were legally entitled to reinstatement in their former job on release from their compulsory service, if the job was still available. (Persons called up for Civil Defence duties are also guaranteed reinstatement.) It was requested that transferred workers in industry should be afforded the same right of reinstatement.

It was agreed by the General Council that, while compulsory reinstatement would be administratively difficult in the case of workers who had transferred voluntarily to a more remunerative engagement, it should be urged in the case of workers compulsorily transferred by a direction of the Minister of Labour or transferred under the influence of the Ministry.

It was further suggested that the responsibility for providing information regarding transfers which had already been effected, other than those which had been effected by compulsory direction, of which the Ministry already had a record, should rest with the original employer; and also that applications for reinstatement should be made by the workers concerned within a specified period of the termination of the employment to which the transfer had been made.

Consideration is still being given to this, and legislation to cover the point is to be introduced along with the legislation for the restoration of pre-war trade practices which is the subject of active consideration at the present time.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Proceedings, op. cit.*, p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 152-3.

In addition to the inclusion of reinstatement rights in collective agreements covering some workers, the Minister of Labour has stated that in a large number of cases people had been transferred by consent, on the basis of arrangements with large industries, and that these workers would be given first preference in employment after the war. "Thousands of women have been transferred by this method over a large area of industries, with this advantage—that proper registers are being kept. The firms who have accommodated the workpeople will be the first on those lists to go back to those industries. The double advantage is that it will be good for the men and women to have the assurance that they will go back, and secondly, good for the firms to get quickly off the mark into their post-war development."<sup>1</sup>

The Minister of Labour and National Service, in consultation with the Joint Consultative Committee, has given attention to the advisability of framing legislative provisions to govern the question of the reinstatement of transferred workers. In reply to a question asked in the House of Commons on 9 October 1941, however, he said that he had come to the conclusion "that it is about impossible to embody really effective administrative provisions in an Act of Parliament", and continued:

The Government are giving consideration to the questions that will arise on the demobilisation of the Forces and of the people who have been transferred, and up to the moment the only satisfactory solution which is deemed to be likely to be successful is that where these disturbances have taken place, there should be certain general social obligations . . . The worst thing the House could do would be to find some loose legislation which, when it came to be carried out, would not prove to be effective. I am bound to say that the way in which my mind is moving is that there should be a general social obligation of some kind.<sup>2</sup>

The present position is, therefore, that the Government is not planning any special action to provide future employment security for transferred war workers. It has come to the conclusion that it is impossible to draft any effective guarantee for their future employment and that the rights already granted to men in the Armed Forces are of little practical value. It considers that the problem is one which affects the whole industrial and military population of the country and that the solution for it must be on an equally broad basis. The Government's efforts are thus directed towards planning for the existence of adequate employment opportunities in the post-war period. Throughout the country, increasing

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 4 December 1941, col. 1353.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 October 1941, cols. 1094-5.

emphasis is being placed on employment security as the cornerstone of the post-war economy. The trade unions, although not satisfied that the present efforts of the Government are sufficient to produce this security, are now convinced that this broad approach to the problem is the only practical one and that little, if anything, can be gained by special legislation or agreements to cover the situation of transferred war workers.

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## V. ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANISATION

It has fallen to the Ministry of Labour and National Service to develop the vast administrative machinery that has been required to effect the tremendous movement of population needed to meet the labour requirements of war industries. The organisation of labour transference has been based largely upon the well-developed system of employment exchanges of the Ministry of Labour, strengthened as and where necessary by special ancillary labour supply machinery built up around the exchanges. This organisation has been immeasurably strengthened by the collaboration and participation of organised employers and workers throughout the country in working out the principles and procedures for transferring labour from one job to another.

### GENERAL ORGANISATION OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE<sup>1</sup>

#### (a) *Headquarters Departments*

The headquarters departments of the Ministry of Labour and National Service are responsible for formulating the general lines of policy to be followed by the regional and local offices of the Ministry; for supervising the carrying-out of the policy; and for working out any special problems involved in its administration and enforcement. The labour supply departments are grouped under a Director-General of Man Power responsible to the Minister of Labour. They include three labour supply departments (A, B and C), the Training Department, the National Service Department, the Military Recruiting Department, the Appointments Department, and the Manpower Statistics and Intelligence Branch.

Since the great majority of wartime transference problems are national in scope, extending beyond the competence of any one region of the country, the responsibilities of the headquarters of the Ministry have been vastly increased during the war. There has therefore been a tendency to centralise, in many respects, the administration of labour supply policy at the national level.

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<sup>1</sup> A brief description of the welfare machinery of the Ministry may be found on pp. 120-123.

*(b) Regional Offices*

Nevertheless, the 11 regional offices of the Ministry of Labour constitute the pivot of the country's labour supply organisation. Each regional office is under a Regional Controller, who is responsible for all the work of the Ministry within the region. It is subdivided into sections corresponding roughly to the departmental organisation of the headquarters of the Ministry. The regional offices organise labour supply work within their areas, supervise and direct the activities of the exchanges, and make a wide variety of important decisions on the application of policy.

The activities of the regional offices have been completely revolutionised as a result of the war. Before the outbreak of hostilities they were passive agencies of a depression economy, sunk in the routine of unemployment benefit claims and relief. Now they are positive instruments of the war economy, playing an ever-increasing part both in the organisation of employment and in the planning and carrying out of the whole war production programme in their areas. They have gradually become a central feature of the regional organisation of the war economy.

*(c) District Manpower Offices*

Within the regions, the next unit of organisation of the Ministry of Labour and National Service is the District Manpower Office. There are now 44 of these Offices, under the direct control of District Manpower Boards. Each Board is made up of five officials of the Ministry of Labour—a chairman, a Labour Supply Officer, a Military Recruiting Officer, a Deferment Officer, and a Woman Power Officer. The size of the Manpower Offices varies with the industrial importance of the geographical area which they cover. There are four large Offices, each with a departmental staff of over 100 and a technical staff of 20 or more, and the remaining 40 Offices are smaller, the departmental staff varying from 25 to 60 and the technical staff from 5 to 15.<sup>1</sup>

The District Manpower Offices were first set up in the spring of 1942 in order to handle the questions of deferment from military service involved in the abolition of the Schedule of Reserved Occupations and Protected Work and in the conscription of women under the National Service Act (No. 2) of December 1941. This remains their primary function; but in relating this work to the other work of the Ministry of Labour, the activities of the Manpower Offices have been expanding. Their approach to the with-

<sup>1</sup> The technical staff includes the Inspectors of Labour Supply, who work largely from the District Offices (see below, pp. 149-153).

drawal of workers from industry and to their deferment from national service is on the basis of individual establishments. For each employing firm, a separate "dossier" is built up which includes all the information relating to the workers (both men and women) affected by the national service procedure; all the data from the local employment exchanges regarding the incidence on the firm of the Registration for Employment Order procedure and the special arrangements for the compulsory withdrawal of young women workers; the material submitted by the Inspectors of Labour Supply and the supply department concerned with the firm's production as to the importance of the product and the specific value of the services of each worker concerned to that production; and any other relevant information (training and up-grading arrangements, hours of work, part-time employment, etc.) which affects the labour requirements of the firm. As these "dossiers" are established, firm by firm, it is expected that the District Manpower Offices will gradually come to have a more accurate and more detailed view of the district labour supply situation than could be held by the regional offices or by the headquarters of the Ministry of Labour and a more comprehensive view of the position than could be obtained by the local employment exchanges.

Since the District Manpower Offices have been operating for a short time only, it is not now possible to define their present functions with any exactitude. It should be emphasised, however, that the Manpower Offices are not placement agencies and that the placement work continues to be done on the exchange level. The relation of the district offices to the local employment exchanges, on the one side, and to the regional offices, on the other, has not yet been worked out in any great detail but is developing out of the work being done. The District Manpower Offices seem to be more than a temporary wartime addition to the employment system however; and it is likely that they will become an integral and permanent part of the machinery of the Ministry of Labour.

#### (d) *Employment Exchanges*

The basic local unit of organisation of the Ministry of Labour is the employment exchange. In all, there are 510 employment exchanges—42 first class exchanges, 108 second class exchanges and 360 third class exchanges (the class being determined by the size and industrial importance of the geographical area covered by the exchange). In addition, smaller localities are served by employment offices, which are administratively responsible to specified



employment exchanges; still smaller places by branch employment offices; and still more sparsely settled areas by local agencies.<sup>1</sup>

The network of employment exchanges has had a tremendous volume of work imposed upon it since the outbreak of war. The size of its tasks may be indicated by the single fact that from September 1939 to June 1942 the exchanges have handled no fewer than 23,000,000 registrations. The functions of the exchanges in regard to labour transference are many and varied, including:

- (1) To carry out and examine the registrations of workers which provide a factual basis for transfer;
- (2) To interview workers in registered occupational categories or age groups regarding their availability for and willingness to transfer to war work;
- (3) To provide information on the local demand for and supply of labour and the consequent extent and character of the need for labour transference;
- (4) To organise the placement of workers thrown out of employment by accident or by deliberate Government policies, such as the concentration of production scheme;
- (5) To keep a record of the transfers of workers from one industry to another effected by the Ministry of Labour and National Service;
- (6) To give travelling vouchers and pay travel and other allowances to workers asked or directed to transfer;
- (7) To recruit and select workers for transfer to essential work.

The war has made it necessary to reassess the functions and adapt the procedures of the employment exchanges. "It is very difficult", the Minister of Labour said, "to graft an improvised organisation on to a settled machine . . . The employment exchanges that had to undertake this duty had for many years been engaged mainly with grappling with masses of unemployed. The whole outlook had to be changed. They had to be directed to placing people and not merely paying people. The exchange machinery had not been expanded as it ought to have been to meet this contingency."<sup>2</sup> Accommodation and staff were inadequate, and both had to be extended very rapidly. The staff had to learn to deal with new "clients". Speaking in May 1941, the Minister of Labour said: "I have tried to humanise the Labour Exchanges, and, honestly, I

<sup>1</sup> The functions of the branch employment offices and local agencies are limited, to some extent, and they are normally staffed by part-time officials who provide their own premises. There are altogether 419 employment offices, 293 branch employment offices and 290 local agencies.

<sup>2</sup> Ernest BEVIN: *The War and The Workers*, speech of 20 October 1941 (Labour Party Pamphlet), p. 6.

think with success. I have appointed special people and have tried to create in them the idea that their prime duty as officials is not to pay out relief, but to find a clue in the occupation or the hobby of the men they are interviewing which would lead to the discernment of their capacity for assisting the war effort."<sup>1</sup>

(e) *National Service Officers*

The Minister of Labour and National Service was given the power, under the Defence Regulations, to direct any person to perform specified services required of him by or on behalf of the Minister. The direct representatives of the Minister for this purpose are termed National Service Officers. These Officers are Government officials armed with a National Service Officer's warrant. They number altogether about 3,000, of whom the great majority (2,560) are officials of the Ministry of Labour and a few (450) are officials of other Government departments. In the Ministry of Labour, officials of the grade of employment officer and above may be granted National Service Officers' powers. In practice, these powers are always held by the manager of an employment exchange and his deputy and generally by several other officials of the exchange (the number depending upon the volume of work to be done under National Service Officer's warrant). In addition, a number of the regional and headquarters officials of the Ministry of Labour hold National Service powers. The officials outside the Ministry of Labour who possess National Service Officers' warrants are limited in number and comprise only persons in departments where placement questions are handled by specialists (as for the mercantile marine, for example).

(f) *Inspectors of Labour Supply*

To act as a direct link between the machinery of the Ministry of Labour and the individual factories, an Inspectorate of Munitions Labour Supply was established in the Ministry of Labour in 1940. Since then, specialised inspectors have been appointed to deal with the problems of particular war industries (such as building construction, shipbuilding, iron and steel, chemicals, and coalmining), and a number of so-called non-technical inspectors have been made responsible for inspection work in a variety of non-munitions industries with less specialised labour requirements.

The Inspectors of Munitions Labour Supply now number 419. They have been recruited largely from among trade unionists with

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<sup>1</sup> Luncheon speech to Delegates attending the 40th Annual Conference of the Administrative Council. *Printing Federation Bulletin*, May 1941, p. 3.

engineering experience and to a lesser extent from among the executive and supervisory personnel of engineering firms. Administratively, most of these inspectors are attached to the technical Labour Supply Officers of the District Manpower Boards, although a few of them are directly responsible to the regional offices of the Ministry of Labour.<sup>1</sup>

The main duty of the Munitions Labour Supply Inspectors is to investigate production delays said to be caused by labour shortages, to recommend steps to overcome the bottlenecks, and to examine the utilisation of labour (skilled and unskilled). Their work is many-sided and varies from one industrial area to another in accordance with local resources and requirements. One of the Regional Chief Inspectors of Munitions Labour Supply has summarised the chief duties of the Inspectorate in this way:

(1) To examine demands for labour made by individual firms, and to determine whether they are justified in the light of the work to be undertaken;

(2) In respect of demands for skilled labour, to determine to what extent the firm concerned can meet its own needs by:

(a) Re-distribution of skilled workers already in its employment;

(b) Up-grading of semi-skilled workers;

(c) Sub-division of processes, and adjustment of the firm's demands accordingly;

(3) To inspect firms already employing skilled labour, and to determine to what extent skilled labour can be released;

(4) To stimulate training by employers in their workshops, and by using to the full the local facilities in technical institutes, etc;

(5) To investigate, when required, alleged infringement of the Undertakings (Restriction on Engagement) Order;

(6) To investigate, when required, departures from trade practices notified under the Conditions of Employment and National Arbitration Order, 1940. In addition, inspectors may be required in the course of their investigations to undertake special enquiries, e.g., regarding the work performed by particular men whose calling-up for military service has been deferred, or who are stated to be reserved by the Schedule of Reserved Occupations.<sup>2</sup>

The carrying out of these general duties raises a host of special problems in each area. Much is left "to the initiative and common sense of the inspector concerned, whose value to the Department depends largely upon the extent to which he exercises these powers", the Regional Chief Inspector stated. "Investigations must be conducted with tact, and so far as possible the inspector's aim is to

<sup>1</sup> Before the creation of the Manpower Boards, most of the inspectors worked from the regional offices of the Ministry, although some reported directly to local Labour Supply Committees. With the establishment of the Manpower Boards, the inspectors were transferred to the Boards, as a rule; but the regions were given discretion to keep attached to the regional office as many as appeared to be required for special regional work.

<sup>2</sup> MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE: *Engineering Bulletin*, June 1941, pp. 7-8.

encourage agreement of the firms inspected." The inspector must persuade employers to use their skilled workers to the full, but at the same time he must be ready to recommend that the employers lend or transfer their trained men to another employer, if this is in the national interest. In principle and generally in practice, the inspectors work in close association with officers of the Ministries of Supply and Aircraft Production and the Admiralty in regard to the utilisation of skill, dilution and training. This is clearly essential since the Supply Departments are in a position to enforce their authority in these matters and the Ministry of Labour must generally have their backing in any action which is agreed to be necessary.

During the summer of 1940, the Inspectors of Labour Supply were recruited hastily and immediately had to perform the unpleasant tasks of persuading employers and workers to make relatively heavy personal sacrifices. They were somewhat unpopular at first. The Minister of Labour pointed out later "that the Inspectorate was new, that the machine had to be hurriedly established, and I have no doubt there was some resentment which hindered its operation, but this has now entirely disappeared, and, indeed, just as in the case of the Factory Inspectorate, so the new Inspectorate I find is now welcome".<sup>1</sup> The work of the Munitions Inspectorate as a whole has been of considerable significance in the country's labour supply organisation and it has increased in importance in proportion to the stringency of the employment market. In most cases, the degree of willing co-operation in the inspection work from both employers and workers is reported to have been remarkable. Current criticism of the Munitions Inspectorate seems to relate not so much to the functions and organisation of the Inspectorate as to the personal competence of individual inspectors to perform satisfactorily the duties entrusted to them.

In addition to the Inspectors of Labour Supply for the wide group of munitions industries, there are 73 Building Labour Supply Inspectors who are attached to the regional offices of the Ministry of Labour. These inspectors are primarily responsible for ensuring the efficient use and distribution of labour in the building industry. They make suggestions for economy in the use of all types of building labour; where necessary, they help to bring in additional labour from outside the industry; and they recommend the transference of workers from one site to another within the industry

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<sup>1</sup> "Industry and the War Effort", speech of 18 September 1940, in *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, October 1940, p. 260.

so that the labour available is distributed according to the relative priority of the work to be done.

There are also a number of Port Labour Inspectors, the precise number in each port being determined by the size and needs of the port. These inspectors are responsible for supervising the utilisation and distribution of dock labour and for dealing with any snags that may arise in the application of the dock labour schemes.

Shipyard Labour Supply Officers, appointed in regions with wartime shipyards, deal generally with questions of the use and dilution of shipyard labour. There are 12 such officers, aided by 12 assistants. They work under the control of the regional offices but are stationed in the districts in which they work and allocated to the shipyards where they work. Their functions are much the same as those of munitions inspectors, except that the Shipyard Labour Supply Officers have slightly increased powers.

In the iron and steel and chemical industries, specialised Inspectors of Labour Supply, drawn from the industries, investigate the use of labour and help to apply the decisions taken by the central and regional labour supply committees for these "ring fence" industries. There are in all 11 iron and steel Labour Supply Inspectors and 13 chemical inspectors. Administratively, they are attached to the regional offices.

For the coalmining industry, 18 special labour supply officers have been appointed to the staff of the Regional Controller of the Ministry of Labour in coalmining regions. Their general duties are to assist in the supply and most economical distribution of coalminers, including the placement of men in mines best suited to their experience and with a minimum of travelling or transfer from home; the redistribution of men between neighbouring pits so as to reduce travelling and transfer to a minimum; and the transfer of surplus labour from one pit to another.

Finally, there are a number of non-technical Inspectors of Labour Supply, whose main work is to comb through the labour supply of the less essential industries with a view to withdrawing men and women for more essential work or for the Services. These inspectors are attached, as a rule, to the District Manpower Offices.

The existence of an Inspectorate of Labour Supply as an integral part of the Ministry of Labour has sometimes been criticised as being too narrow to ensure full collaboration with the Supply Departments. It has been suggested that it should be a service responsible to a committee of each of the Supply Departments and of the Ministry of Labour, but this suggestion has not been adopted. One step which was taken to associate a supply department more

directly with the Inspectorate of Labour Supply was a joint inspection of labour in the aircraft industry. This inspection was carried out by production officers of the Ministry of Aircraft Production and Inspectors of Labour Supply of the Ministry of Labour. The production officers were able to provide information on the programmes arranged for each firm and the contracts they might expect in the future; and, on this basis, the Labour Supply Inspectors were in a better position to calculate the amount of surplus labour or the extent of labour shortage, and to recommend transfers, either temporary or permanent, from one plant to another or from one branch of the industry to another. This system of joint inspection has not become an established practice but such inspections can be, and sometimes are, arranged where they appear to be helpful in investigating particular cases.

(g) *Relations with the Supply Departments*

Although the primary responsibility for mobilising labour for war industry falls on the Ministry of Labour and National Service, the Ministry's work has necessarily to be integrated with the activities of the Supply Departments. It is not possible to describe in the present report the complicated and extensive inter-relationships between the production machinery of the Supply Departments and the labour supply organisation of the Ministry of Labour. Moreover, the whole production machinery is in process of reorganisation at present and the structure of collaboration between this machinery and the existing labour supply machinery is likewise changing.<sup>1</sup>

While much remains to be done in welding all the elements of the production programme, including labour supply, into an integrated whole, a good deal of *ad hoc* machinery had been set up by June 1942 to work out the difficult problems of co-ordination on labour transference that had arisen. At the national level, general principles of manpower mobilisation are formulated by the Cabinet and by the War Cabinet, and in particular by the Minister for Production and the Minister for Labour and National Service. More detailed policy is worked out by a co-ordinating committee representative of the principal officers of the headquarters of the Ministry of Labour and the Supply Departments. This committee meets regularly; and some of its work is carried on by sub-committees (as, for example, that set up to establish labour preferences). It discusses a variety of the problems of labour supply which over-

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<sup>1</sup> Information in regard to the production and labour supply organisation may be found in the *Seventh and Eighth Reports from the Select Committee on National Expenditure*, Session 1941-1942 (London, 1942), and *Report of the Committee on Regional Boards* (Cmd. 6360, London, 1942).

lap the competence of any one department, attempts to prevent duplication of effort and to conciliate any conflicting points of view among the various departments, works out methods for meeting labour supply bottlenecks in the production programme, etc. If these officials disagree and cannot come to any decision, the points of disagreement may be carried by any one of them to his Minister and taken by the Minister for a Cabinet decision. In addition to this co-ordinating committee, there are, of course, a great many informal inter-departmental meetings at which particular aspects of labour redistribution policy are discussed by the officials dealing with them.

At the regional level, the situation up to the present has been that the regional officials of the Ministry of Labour have had far more power of decision than the regional representatives of the Supply Departments. This has tended to prevent the development of effective regional machinery for working out solutions for transference problems within the region. Nevertheless, a great many such problems are worked out by the regional officers of the departments concerned. The regional boards of the Production Executive were urged in October 1941 to set up labour supply sub-committees. The sub-committees which were set up consisted of the chairman and deputy chairman of the regional board, the regional representatives of the three Supply Departments and the Board of Trade, the regional controller of the Ministry of Labour and the regional transport commissioner. Their functions were defined as follows:

- (i) To assist the Ministry of Labour and National Service to meet the demands for labour in the munitions industries, and in particular the demands for skilled engineering labour which cannot be met without special measures;
- (ii) To hear, and as far as possible, settle disputed cases in which the Regional Officer concerned at the instance of the employer concerned, or otherwise, objects to proposals which have been made by the Ministry of Labour for the transfer of labour, up-grading, dilution, training, or increased employment of women.

These sub-committees have worked very effectively in some regions; but their work has never been as useful as had been hoped because of the lack of authority of the regional representatives of the Supply Departments to take decisions at the regional level. What happened in practice was either that the supply department representatives referred matters up to headquarters, in which case there was a long delay, or that the Ministry of Labour would press its view only up to a point where the supply department representatives would concur. This has naturally made the procedure less effective as the shortage of manpower has become more severe. In addition to the sub-committees of the regional boards, meetings

are frequently held under the chairmanship of the Regional Controller of the Minister of Labour (or his deputy) which are attended by several of the principal officers of the regional office of the Ministry of Labour, by labour supply officers of the District Manpower Offices, by employment exchange managers (in some cases) and by the field representatives of the Supply Departments. These meetings thrash out regional problems of dilution, training and up-grading; inspection of labour supply and the withdrawal of skilled men for transfer elsewhere; procedure for and action taken to fill preference vacancies; and a variety of other matters. Representatives of the Supply Departments can voice the grievances of the firms producing for them and the officers in the Ministry of Labour can explain their position, policy and plans, and relate them to the current work and need of the Supply Departments. If necessary, questions raised at this committee may be taken by the Supply Departments or the Ministry of Labour to the sub-committee on labour supply of the regional production boards. As at the national level, there is a wide variety of informal meetings and contacts between the regional officers of the Ministry of Labour and those of the Supply Departments.

Finally, the Ministry of Labour collaborates with the Capacity Clearing Centres by attaching to each Centre an Inspector of Labour Supply to help in determining where bottlenecks in production which have been brought to the attention of the Centre may be overcome by the loan or transfer of skilled men and to use the material provided by the Centre as a guide in the work of labour supply inspection in the district.

The setting up of the Ministry of Production and the development of effective regional production machinery is expected to be a step forward in the integration of the labour supply organisation with the rest of the production machinery. The establishment of close co-ordination is an essential element in manpower organisation at the present stage of the war effort.

#### GOVERNMENT-EMPLOYER-WORKER COLLABORATION

"The action taken in this field of labour supply reveals something more than skilful organisation", one of the leading trade union journals emphasised. "It is a great experiment in co-operation between the two sides of industry, which has been marked by a determination to trust in voluntary and democratic methods and by a belief in social justice."<sup>1</sup> A failure to understand and to appreciate the part played by employers and workers in the framing and

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<sup>1</sup> *Transport and General Workers Record*, April 1941, p. 184.



application of measures for transferring labour to war employment would lead to a complete misapprehension of British labour redistribution policy. Through formal and informal machinery, their representatives have made possible and greatly facilitated the extensive transference that has taken place during the war. Their active participation in this work constitutes one of the distinctive features of the British system of allocating workers to essential industry.

The formal machinery for general collaboration on labour supply matters has already been described in a report by the International Labour Office entitled *Wartime Developments in Government-Employer-Worker Collaboration*; it has not been altered greatly since the publication of that report.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the role of the employers and workers in labour transfer policy has been emphasised in the preceding sections of this report. Here, therefore (and without overlooking the extremely important work done by the Joint Consultative Committee), may be found merely a brief review of some of the more informal methods of collaboration that have been developed to deal with specific problems of labour transfer.

Many problems involved in transferring workers from one job to another can be substantially diminished or even avoided altogether by the collaboration of employers and workers with the Government officials responsible for transfer arrangements. The trade union movement has often proved its assertion that much friction and inconvenience to all concerned can be eliminated by prior consultations with trade union officials when large numbers of workers are moved from one employment to another; and that these consultations are especially valuable when begun at an early stage, so that the trade union officials can help to ensure the success of the arrangements made by the Inspectors of Labour Supply with the management. The employers, for their part, are equally aware of the advantages which can be derived from co-operative action to deal with the many problems of labour transference which affect their interests.

Frequently, therefore, special committees of employers and workers in industries from which many workers are being transferred have been established to define the principles upon which the workers were to be called to transfer and to work out the procedures in such a way as to cause least inconvenience to the operations of the industry. The machinery set up by the retail distributive trades provides a good example of this type of collaboration.

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<sup>1</sup> Changes made are summarised briefly in the Industrial and Labour Information Section of the *International Labour Review*, published monthly by the International Labour Office.

It was decided, in the autumn of 1941, to withdraw all women aged 20 to 25 from the retail distribution trades (other than food). Before the decision was taken, however, the matter was discussed with the employers' side of the Retail Distributive Trades Conference and the two trade unions concerned, and both parties agreed to co-operate fully. In order to make this co-operation effective, a Central Advisory Panel was set up, comprising representatives of both employers and workers, with the following terms of reference:

The object for which the Panel has been constituted is primarily to enable the Ministry to obtain advice on questions of the labour requirements of the retail trades other than food, and on the methods of obtaining the release of workers for other vital war work. While the Ministry does not contemplate that it will itself find it necessary to refer to the Panel questions affecting military recruitment, it will be open to the Panel to raise any such questions in so far as they are general questions affecting the non-food retail trade as a whole, but whenever possible due notice should be given before any such questions are raised, in order that the appropriate officials of the Department may be able to attend.<sup>1</sup>

Regional Panels, consisting of four employers' and four workers' representatives, have been set up in each of the administrative regions of the Ministry of Labour; and the Regional Controller (or his representative) acts as chairman. Both sides of the Central Panel submit nominations for representatives on the Regional Panels. Finally, in most of the 500-odd employment exchange areas, sub-committees of the Local Employment Committees have been set up, consisting of three employers' and three workers' representatives from the retail trades, with a chairman drawn from the Local Employment Committee. The employers are selected from nominations (up to a maximum of nine) from local traders' organisations; and the workers are nominated by the workers' members of the Central Panel (more than 3 nominations being made, if possible). In addition to giving general advice on the local labour supply problems of the retail trades, the sub-committees help the local exchanges to deal with employers' applications for the retention of key workers.

In all the industries affected by the curtailment and concentration of production schemes, conferences were held before the schemes were applied to acquaint the organisations affected with the necessity for the action proposed, to secure their suggestions and advice, and to obtain their co-operation in the final decisions regarding the application of the schemes. Many of these industries set up *ad hoc* joint committees to facilitate the application of the

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<sup>1</sup> *The New Dawn*, 22 November 1941, p. 371.

schemes district by district. In this way, discrimination and arbitrary action has been avoided, so far as possible. The Government was able to explain its policy to both sides of the industry; employers were able to explain their difficulties; and trade union leaders were able to safeguard their members from unnecessary inconvenience and heavy financial loss. For example, when large numbers of boot and shoe operatives were asked to volunteer for iron ore mining, *ad hoc* committees were set up to discuss the matter with officials of the Ministry of Labour and to carry out the organisation of the transference without upsetting the industry and the workers more than was absolutely necessary. The trade unionists concerned stated, afterwards, that through these discussions they had been able to obtain useful safeguards which might not otherwise have been a part of the arrangements.

In particular non-essential plants forced to reduce their labour force or to close down completely, representatives of management and of labour often assist the Ministry's officers by explaining why the reduction of operations is necessary in the national interest and how it can most easily be carried out. This type of co-operation is indispensable in organising transfers when a number of workers are affected in any one plant, and it has tremendously facilitated the work of the labour supply officers. The same help is given by employers and workers on an industry-wide, district-wide, or nationwide scale; but its maintenance and development in individual plants is a factor of great importance in the present British system of labour transference.

In the essential industries to which workers are being transferred in large numbers, machinery for consultation on their absorption was first set up or put to use under the dilution agreements. Each one of these is carried out through joint committees which must come to some agreement before workers not properly qualified to perform the jobs in question are brought into the industry. In addition, employers' representatives have been helpful in persuading employers in war plants to accept the workers offered to them; and the workers' representatives have helped to impress on other workers the need for loosening up, where necessary, on the trade union practices which prevent the entry of new workers in sufficient numbers to meet war needs. However, despite these types of collaboration, complaints have been voiced by unions on the receiving side of the transfer movement to the effect that they have not always been adequately consulted before large numbers of workers are brought into shops under their control. The Amalgamated Engineering Union, for example, has insisted that the trade unions which are receiving a steady stream of transferred workers must be con-

sulted long enough in advance for arrangements to be made for their absorption. The Government has recognised the truth of this claim and efforts are now made to give the local unions sufficient advance notice. At the present time, there is close and regular contact between the engineering and shipbuilding unions and the Ministry of Labour on all labour supply matters, including labour transference.

In industries in which special arrangements have been adopted to regulate inter-industry labour mobility, it has been seen that the employers and workers have sometimes been given a direct share in the actual application of policy as a counterpart of the additional discipline imposed on both groups. For example, the dock labour schemes in most of the ports are now administered by the tripartite agency, the National Dock Labour Corporation, which is responsible, among other things, for supervising the allocation of labour from port to port in accordance with the needs of the industry. In the iron and steel and chemical industries, employers and workers have executive and administrative responsibilities in regard to the distribution of the industries' labour force.

The inspection of labour supply, always a difficult and exacting task, has been necessarily entrusted to the people with practical knowledge of industry—to the workers and managerial staff of essential industries. These men are generally the more capable to perform their work since they can obtain from other employers and workers the maximum of co-operation.

In bringing to light and meeting the many social problems raised by the transfer of workers from one place to another, workers' representatives, in particular, have played a very active and useful role. Their practical experience has invariably helped the welfare officers of the Ministries of Labour, of Health and of Food to deal, under very difficult conditions, with the special problems of transferred war workers and their families; and their steady pressure on these Government officials has been a great factor in the improvement in welfare that has taken place and that is helping to speed war production.

In the direct administrative machinery of the Ministry of Labour, a wide and spreading network of joint advisory committees provides the machinery for employer-worker collaboration in the day-to-day planning and administration of labour supply policy. From the National Joint Consultative Committee of the Minister of Labour down through the regions to the local employment committee in the smallest exchange area, employers' and workers' representatives are carrying an appreciable share of the wartime burden placed on the officers of the Ministry. Naturally, the

work of these committees varies with the personnel of the different committees; but they are often a nucleus group with an important influence on other employers and workers and with authority to speak for them on labour supply questions.

Frequently, of course, the interests of employers and workers in the matter of transfer do not coincide. Moreover, the interests of both frequently differ from those of the Government officials dealing with labour supply. In the absence of machinery for bringing together these divergent views, friction would be bound to develop, because the transfer of people is an unwieldy thing at best. With adequate machinery for collaboration, however, experience in Britain has shown not only that differing views can be reconciled but also that the whole process of labour transfer can be tremendously facilitated. It could not have been done without collaboration. It is, as the Minister of Labour declared, the "co-operative will" of the employers and workers throughout the country, together with the work of the officials of the Ministry of Labour and National Service, that has made possible the mobilisation and transfer of labour required to meet the growing needs of the British war economy. This has sometimes meant delay in taking action but it has generally meant that the policy is understood and accepted by labour and management before steps are taken to put it into effect and that their representatives take an active part in ensuring its success.

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## VI. THE PRESENT SITUATION

In less than three years of war, between four and five million people in Britain have been shifted from their homes and transferred to war work in other parts of the country. Persons never before employed in industry and never before away from home have been brought into war factories by the hundreds of thousands, while, in addition, other hundreds of thousands of workers have been transferred from less essential to essential work. The limited number of highly skilled workers are gradually being shifted into the work where their skills can serve the industrial effort to best advantage.

Policy for transferring labour to war work has now reached a stage at which its general outlines are virtually complete. The Government possesses the necessary powers for mobilising manpower for war industries. The controlling principles, the methods and the machinery for directing men and women into jobs where they are most needed have been clearly established. The collaboration of labour and management has been secured. While changes will certainly be made in the future, as they have been in the past, the general pattern of action is readily apparent from the experience of these last years of war.

The basic labour demands of the munitions factories have now been met. In this process, labour reserves throughout the country have been nearly exhausted. Although there are still untapped sources of supply in the less essential industries and among the unoccupied population, these sources are being drained by a steady tightening of the measures already taken to mobilise men and women for war work. But it seems improbable that these measures can bring any appreciable increase in the total labour force available for war industries since the needs of the Armed Forces for men and of the auxiliary services for women are still tremendous and must be met. To satisfy the requirements of war industries, it will therefore be necessary to rely to an increasing extent on a redistribution of the existing munitions labour supply and on a new drive to make the most efficient use of the services of each war worker.

Redistribution of the country's war workers means continuing transfers of both skilled and unskilled workers among the basic munitions industries and among the undertakings within each of these industries. For example, some of the large shell-filling factories now have too many women workers for present needs and many thousands of these women may have to be shifted to factories still needing labour. Within the munitions industries, the ratio of skilled labour to trainees, unskilled and other labour in the different plants may have to be adjusted more logically than was possible during the earliest rush for manpower. There are said to be differences of as much as 30 per cent. in this ratio among plants doing the same operation or series of operations, and though some of these differences are bound to continue to exist, others may be eliminated through the work of production engineers. With this shifting of war workers, some of those who were transferred away from their homes may be brought back to fill war jobs which may have arisen only after their departures and which may have been filled by workers transferred from other centres. In some cases, reciprocal exchanges may be arranged between transferred workers in two different centres, both of whom may thus return to their homes.

Transference of labour will be necessary not only to secure a more rational distribution of war workers, however. The war production programme itself is in continuous evolution. Changes in it involve corresponding changes in the labour preferences established for the various industries and firms. At one stage, skilled men may have to be drawn from a variety of war industries and sent to urgent shipbuilding work. At another stage, building construction may be given over-all priority. At still another stage, all possible resources of skill may have to be concentrated on producing a new type of aircraft.

Continuous mobility is therefore an essential element in the labour force assembled for the munitions industries. It can be secured only by persistent effort. It involves an intensive scrutiny of what each man and woman is actually doing. It means reaching deeply into each plant to analyse its labour requirements in order to uncover possible unused reserves of labour power. It necessitates further action to eliminate the obstacles to transference from one war industry to another and from one job and plant to another in the same industry. It requires added effort to improve the techniques of making the transfers which are clearly in the national interest.

The whole problem of redistributing the munitions labour force is closely bound up with the problem of increasing labour

productivity. The need for rigid economy in the use of the services of each war worker gives vital urgency to all the efforts being made to overcome technical obstacles to maximum production, to lessen labour requirements on each operation, and to expand individual output. In the workshops, in the districts, in the regions and in the country as a whole, the methods and machinery of production must be brought into line with the need for manpower economy. In other words, the distribution of war workers must be organised on the basis of ever improving efficiency in plant production and in general production planning and organisation.

These are a few of the urgent problems of labour redistribution facing Great Britain today. Their solution is being sought on the basis of the methods and machinery already developed. The critical military situation has reinforced the determination of the Government that "not a day's avoidable delay is to be permitted"; and workers and employers are giving ready co-operation in a broad national effort to maximise the production of the munitions of war required for active military operations.

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